

NEW STATESMAN

Will the Afrikaners fight?

Ambassador College

AUG 14 1978

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Labour and the Juntas

In the changed atmosphere created by President Carter's human rights campaign, and by the increased activities of Amnesty International, it is now almost fashionable to include a humanitarian sub-clause in any consideration of a foreign country. Gone are the days when Eleanor Roosevelt could return from Moscow and praise the tidiness of the streets, or when Lord Russell of Liverpool could write in the *Daily Telegraph* (at a time when Salazar was suing the NEW STATESMAN) that on his tour of Portuguese prisons he had not seen a single person being tortured.

But this improvement at the level of conscience has been neither steady nor consistent. Not all countries which violate human rights are guilty to the same extent, and not all condemnations are equally effective. Argentina is one country whose regime considers itself unfairly singled out.

In fact, for quite some time General Videla's government got away, quite literally, with murder. While all too few of us were looking, thousands of Argentines lost their lives or were subjected to treatment which made some of them wish that they could lose them. At present in Chile there is a hunger strike in protest at the disappearance of 1,600 political opponents of the junta. American official estimates of missing persons in Argentina total a conservative 15,000. Repression continues on a scale which makes it absolutely obviously an instrument of state policy and not the work of 'over-zealous' cops. Nor is there much doubt about what qualifies a person for arrest, torture or disappearance. In an interview with this paper, General Videla went on record as saying that he regarded 'ideological crimes' as far more serious than conventional terrorism because they threatened the 'Western and Christian' character of his country. Some ideological crimes are, of course, less serious than others. Pro-Nazi groups are allowed to operate with impunity, since many of their members are also members of the security forces, and anti-semitic propaganda is

tolerated while socialist and rationalist papers are hounded to extinction.

If a leftist or reformist government in Latin America had even dared to approach this scale of arbitrariness, the United States would have overthrown it long ago. But thus far, General Videla has received nothing more than a semi-public admonishment from Cyrus Vance; not the world's most forceful man. It is difficult to open any of the conservative European newspapers at the moment without reading ill-argued denunciations of Carter's refusal to go to war in some part of Africa or another. Questions of 'will' are raised continuously by the Clausewitzes of Printing House Square. Less remarked, because less symmetrical with the Cold War argument, is America's reluctance to turn rhetoric on human rights into action.

The British government has not been much more energetic. Argentina used to be effectively a colony of British capital, and substantial interests still remain, so the point is not an academic one. And British citizens have been among those arrested, maltreated and deported by the Argentine regime. Moreover, Videla's soldiery has been making unilateral moves to repossess the Falkland Islands. One might have thought there was enough here to prompt a more forthright stand on the part of HMG. But, to take one small and crucial item, a visa programme for political refugees was promised 'soon' at the beginning of the year and has yet to materialise. Under the Tories, this country's name was made to stink in Latin America when the doors of the Embassy in Santiago remained shut during the 1973 pogrom. It would be a great pity if that mistake was repeated.

If the World Cup passes off peacefully then there will be a danger of Argentina losing definition in the public mind. So the time for strong statements and useful action by a Labour government would be just about now.

Notes on Politics and Power

Now read the Civil Service's version

We owe our readers an apology. Five weeks ago, in good faith, we reported that a Civil Service lie to MPs had been unearthed 'a month or two' earlier, but that the official concerned, Sir Robert Cox, chief executive of the Property Services Agency, had waited a few weeks before informing the MPs (through Edward du Cann, chairman of the Public Accounts Committee) and apologising for his mistake.

This was wrong. In fact PSA officials first knew of the mistake in March 1977. They had not waited a few weeks, but fourteen months. This information came to light this week when Sir Robert reappeared before the PAC. Unlike the PSA and their mistake, we take the first opportunity for apologising for ours.

The point at issue was a statement by Sir Robert to the PAC in April 1975 that 'in the years immediately before 1969 there had been substantial re-deployment of military resources' north from the Aldershot area. This sought to explain why a national cost-saving policy had been far more successfully pursued in the Southern Region than elsewhere. 'Other regions,' said Sir Robert, 'did not have the same possibilities because the same re-deployments had not taken place.'

On 12 May, following the publication of *Your Disobedient Servant* by Leslie Chapman (Chatto & Windus £3.50), the former director of the PSA's Southern Region, we reported that this was wrong, that Sir Robert had apologised, and that Ken Marks, the minister responsible at the Department of Environment for PSA affairs had admitted the mistake had been known of for 'a month or two'. This week MPs received a memorandum from the Comptroller and Auditor General that not only throws fresh light on the whole murky business, but makes one wonder what Sir Robert thinks he is up to. According to the C & AC: 'The PSA's files recorded that they learnt of the error in the Accounting Officer's (i.e. Cox's) evidence in March 1977 . . . (but) they did not consider that it materially affected the general theme of the Accounting Officer's answer . . . The PSA accordingly decided to defer action until such time as Mr Chapman formally challenged the point, as he subsequently did in his book.'

According to the C & AC, Sir Robert's mistake stemmed from an ill-researched brief by the then Director of Home Regional Services, James Isaac, whose 'faulty recollection' was the cause. But Isaac, of all people, should have known better: for earlier he had been none other than Chapman's predecessor as Director of the Southern Region. At Monday's PAC meeting, astonished MPs asked what sanctions were available against Mr Isaac. None, said Sir Robert, he has retired.

All of which leaves a number of questions unresolved. Why did the minister say his officials had known of the mistake for just a month or two, instead of for more than

a year? If Sir Robert Cox (as he told the PAC) holds himself responsible for misleading MPs, what penance will he offer? (His performance on Monday was sadly reminiscent of the Nixon formula: I am responsible, others are to blame, therefore I shall do nothing.) Finally, when civil servants find they have misled MPs, is it standard practice to wait until publicity is imminent before admitting their mistakes? Cynics, du Cann said on Monday, might take the view that the error was not admitted earlier in the hope that it would never be discovered. Oddly, there was not the remotest hint of sarcasm in his voice.

The BSC's closure programme is biting

Patrick Wintour writes: The steel crisis continues apace. The ailing Davignon Plan for the EEC on steel imports, production levels and minimum prices has about three months to prove itself before Europe's steel producers start shouting everyman for himself. To keep prices up Etienne Davignon, the EEC Commissioner, wants to cut EEC steel production from 36m. tons to 28m. BSC will have to take their share of these cuts. The immediate headache of BSC headquarters is that resistance to golden handshake closures from workers in the smaller BSC plants is gathering. At the Shelton works, due for closure on 23 June and something of a test case for the BSC, the fight to keep the plant open has lasted seven years. Shelton's steelmaking tradition seemed to have won through in 1975 when Shelton emerged the only winner from the Beswick Review which decided that the plant should be given a reprieve through a £20 million investment in an electric arc furnace. But after another twist of the recession and the critical Select Committee report, the Government's White Paper announced 'there is no case at present for new starts on steelmaking capacity' and accordingly the electric arc would not be installed at Shelton.

Without the electric arc Shelton's 1,500 steelworkers are a hopeless proposition, producing by Kaldo converter at £31 per ton

higher cost than the giant ironmaking/Basic Oxygen route at Scunthorpe to which all Shelton's work will be transferred except for the profitable rolling mill section. This transfer will save BSC £12m. Shelton's Shop Stewards' claim that an electric arc would make the plant profitable is backed by the experience of the private steel producers. The private sector's progressive expansion to what is now a quarter of the British market has been largely based on the electric arc. Their success has been such that Alpha Steels are presently installing four electric arcs with a capacity of 1m. tons. GKN, Sheerness and Manchester Steel have all recently put down new electric arc capacity.

The whole argument over Shelton is a sub-section of the general disagreements about the BSC's grand investment strategy that bases itself on a small number of huge integrated works. The Shelton workers say that small mills with electric arcs produce predominantly off scrap which due to the recession is abundant and cheap; that larger plants are not flexible enough to adapt to small orders; that the rate of return on capital would be 40 per cent at a modernised Shelton and at Scunthorpe it will be nearer 8 per cent; and finally that the break even point for Scunthorpe is at over 90 per cent of capacity and at Shelton it would be 60 per cent. BSC say that small mills are workable such as at Skinningrove and Workington (who are leaders in special sections and rails respectively) but the blooms must be supplied low cost from big plants elsewhere.

Giving Brazil their nuclear freedom

Holland is to make another attempt to get Britain and West Germany to include more safeguards in their tri-partite agreement to send enriched nuclear fuel to Brazil. The Dutch Cabinet met last week (ie Friday 9 June) and determined on new approaches to its partners in Urenco, the Anglo-German Dutch company that purveys uranium, enriched by the centrifuge process, from plants at Almelo in Holland and Capenhurst in Cheshire.

But the Dutch Cabinet is split, as is the Dutch Parliament, on how tough to get with its partners. Most would like to go back on the deal unless and until Nuclebras, the Brazilian state company, agrees on new controls to make it more difficult to divert enriched fuel for improper but potent uses in weapons. But Urenco, with the explicit encouragement of the West German government and the implicit consent of the British, has countered by threatening to abandon plans to send the enriched uranium from Holland and simply make it, pack it and send it from Capenhurst instead. This would put Britain in the position of being both the nation that supplies nuclear fuel to Brazil's military Government and the nation that aborted a principled attempt by the Dutch to control the export.

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The lifestyle of Britain's biggest bankrupt

Christopher Hird writes: Losing £100m. by giving his personal guarantee for the debts of his sprawling property empire has not prevented Mr William Stern from living in style, or finding employment. Mr Stern – who once had control of assets valued at over £200m., still lives in a large house in north London, by courtesy of his American relatives. His creditors heard this week that Mr Stern now works for several companies and we can reveal one of them as Pidom Exports, which has been partly financed by the Soviet-owned Moscow Narodny Bank. Pidom is part of a group of companies owned by a Mr Osias Tager, which has several other connections with the old Stern Group. Although Mr Stern's own office is in Kensington he is a frequent visitor – chauffeur driven – to Pidom's office in Harley Street, which is also the home of Pidom's parent company, Eagil Trust.

Mr Tager bought Eagil Trust in May 1976. He joined the board with a Mr Cyril Dicks, and a solicitor named Michael Fielding, a partner in a firm called Grangewoods. In the good old days, Grangewoods acted for the Stern group, and operated from the same building in Prince Consort Road, Kensington.



ton. Mr Fielding says that Grangewoods ceased acting for the group in 1974 – though it was not until 1976 that they left the Kensington office and moved into the present Eagil building in Harley Street.

This property was bought for £478,000 with money provided by the Moscow Narodny Bank. At that time Cyril Dicks – now on the Eagil board – was chief general

manager for the Narodny in London. The property is actually owned by an Eagil Trust subsidiary company named Carlvale, and this provides another echo of the grand, freewheeling days of the Stern group: for one of its directors is a Mr Robert Jones, who was on the board of many of the Stern companies. No chance of Mr Stern feeling lonely in his new career.

Both Tony Benn and David Owen have told Parliament that they are satisfied with the existing safeguards in the Brazil-Ureenco contract. Small signs of British resistance, however, are detectable. On Saturday week (24 June) a demonstration will take place outside the Capenhurst factory by an alliance of groups.

Local authorities keep it dark

Christopher Hird writes: The finance officers of Britain's local authorities meet in Edinburgh this week smarting under an unprecedented public attack on their competence made at the annual meeting of their private sector counterparts, the Institute of Chartered Accountants, last week. Mr Jeremy Cripps – a North London accountant – accused the members of the Certified Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy of being incompetent and not worthy of the title of accountant. He said they produced 'nothing solid, penetrating, open, consistent, simple or objective'. Mr Cripps, who is a Tory parliamentary candidate, was not well received by the assembled accountants, who felt their profession should speak with more moderation. But Mr Cripps has touched a raw nerve. Both CIPFA and the ICA realise that local authority accounts leave a lot to be desired and have, for some time, been looking at ways of improving them.

Most figures local authorities produce are incomprehensible to the ordinary ratepayer (and many councillors), the timetable for producing them is lax, in some local authorities the management accounting systems are prehistoric and ways of comparing performance against budget or one authority against another barely exist.

Local authorities are required by law to produce an abstract of accounts each year. This is audited by one of the country's 600

district auditors who are part of the Audit Inspectorate within the Department of Environment. District auditors do not just add up the figures. They are responsible for making sure that local authorities' spending has been within the law and proper accounting systems are used. They are meant to draw the attention of the chief financial officer to any such failings.

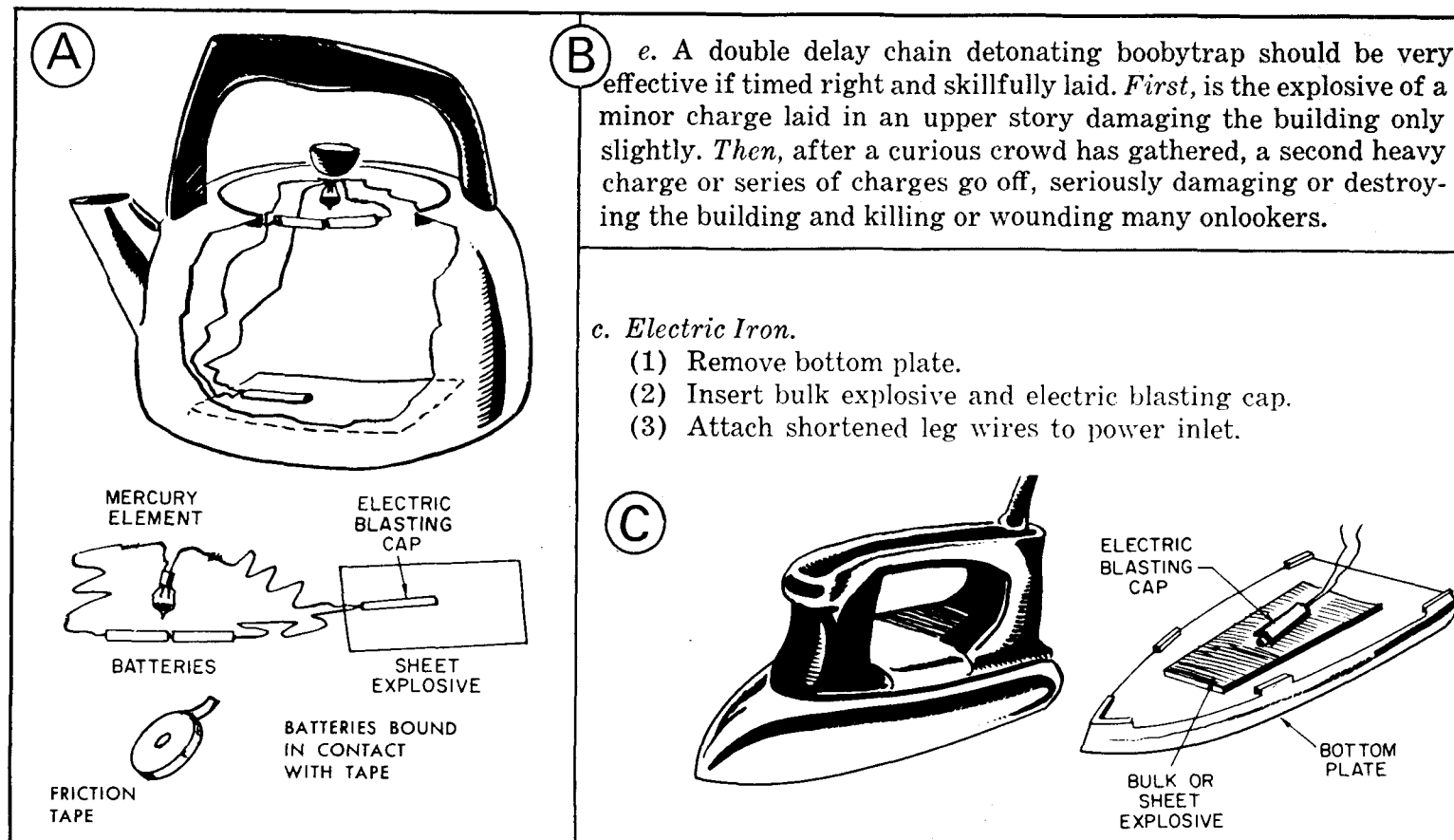
This system produces an enormous amount of information which, both the ICA and CIPFA feel, may be just the trouble. Much of the information is in a form which ratepayers cannot understand or councillors cannot use. In a memo to the Department of Environment in November 1976 the ICA said they thought there was scope to improve the value for money auditing systems in local authorities. At the moment many authorities are not geared up to produce the best financial information on which to plan and monitor a project.

The Chilean junta's spurious amnesty

Dudley Seers writes: The Chilean general amnesty covers only those who committed various types of crime during the State of Siege (11 September 1973 to 10 March 1978) and who either had not been charged at all, or had been charged and sentenced by a military tribunal at the date of the decree. Thus it does not cover those who were under a process of prosecution at that date (which was really a matter of luck), nor does it cover those convicted of civil crimes even committed for political objectives (e.g. robbing a bank to obtain funds for a political organisation). The decree does apply however to common civil crimes including homicide and bodily harm (though not robbery with violence or arson), providing only that prosecutions were not in process at its date. It is difficult to avoid the conclusion

that the object is to make it impossible for military and police personnel, especially the secret police, the DINA (now the CNI) ever to be charged in the future with the assassinations and torture which were common up to about a year ago. Certainly that is its effect. It is true that many political prisoners have been released, but not in a manner that would facilitate their reincorporation into national life. Some were immediately re-arrested, including Jorge Martinez Muñoz for example, on 17 May, whose re-arrest started a riot by other political prisoners. A few – it is claimed – were tortured. Several were compelled or pressed to leave the country – a pressure not easy to resist. The junta has still to give an answer to the whereabouts of over 1,600 people who have 'disappeared' without trace since 1973.

The amnesty did not refer specifically to the more than 20,000 political exiles, but in view of the way it was presented, it was assumed that their return would now be possible. Here again expectations have been dashed. In an interview with Colonel Montero, Sub-Secretario at the Ministry of the Interior, he said each application was considered in the light of behaviour before leaving the country and while abroad. In the end, it is apparently just a matter of administrative judgement. Thus when I asked about the rejection of a Christian Democrat, I was told that the reason was that he had been living with an Argentinian *terrorista*. Of the first 200 applications processed, nearly half were rejected (*Hoy*, 17.5.78). It might be thought from the declared objective of 'reintegrating' the Chilean exiles that they would be allowed to take jobs after returning. Actually, Colonel Montero told me they would not be allowed to work in government, state agencies, public corporations or universities (though he conceded that a private university might make an exception to fill a vacant post).



These are three separate but typical extracts from the US field manual numbered FM 5-3 land entitled Boobytraps. Particularly unpleasant is the amount of deadly advice given on destabilising civilian life. Picture A and C both describe how to sabotage domestic appliances. The book, in addition explains how to boobytrap sofas, fountain pens, chocolate bars and books – 'a book with an attractive cover is sure to invite examination'. Picture C describes how to murder or maim the maximum number of innocent by-standers.

Duncan Campbell: Teaching terror to the Right

Detailed manuals for home made bombs are now being distributed in Britain by right-wing US-based mercenary groups. At least one London military bookshop is openly selling a set of five comprehensive guides to the manufacture of terrorist weapons ranging from basic Molotov cocktails to home-made napalm and armour piercing shells. The manuals, covering sniping, boobytraps, incendiaries, and improvised munitions, cost just £11 for a set. One – the *Improvised Munitions Handbook* – originally written for US Special Forces, is a miniature manual for mayhem.

Military pundits and right wing politicians endlessly denounce the growth of terrorism and call for increasing curtailment of the Left's political and civil liberties. In fact, terrorism in Britain has subsided to almost nothing – and the few incidents so far this year have been directed exclusively against the Left. Letter bombs sent to the Communist Party and elsewhere were attributed to the neo-Nazi fanatics of Column 88. The availability of military death-and-destruction manuals will provide ready recipes for horror in the hands of such terrorists. Yet Scotland Yard say that they cannot prosecute anyone advertising or openly selling such literature.

Their inability or refusal to act against such open sales contrasts poorly with the police crusade against pornography, by comparison utterly harmless.

The guerrilla manuals – all reprints of

official British or US military manuals, some originally classified – are being sold by Motor Books and Accessories Bookshop, near Trafalgar Square. They are also advertised in a notorious and revolting magazine sold at the same shop. This is *Soldier of Fortune: the Journal of Professional Adventurers* published for mercenaries, and doubtless also scores of military voyeurs. The publishers' political stance may well be guessed from the frequent long and sycophantic studies of 'front line' Rhodesian troops. Past issues have included 'replica' Rhodesian army recruiting posters, giving full details of contact addresses – another affront to decency and, in this case at least, an offence under Section 14 of the Rhodesia Sanctions Order.

Soldier of Fortune operates from a Post Office box number in Boulder, Colorado. The same box number serves as the address for two apparently independent publishers advertising in the magazine, Paladin Press (unconnected with the British Paladin Books) and Phoenix Press. Paladin Press have reproduced wholesale a British War Office publication on sniping, first issued (and classified 'restricted') in 1951. Although the techniques of sniping and assassination can have changed little since then, the Ministry of Defence says that the pamphlet is no longer classified – and that they can do little or nothing to prevent the 'technical breach of copyright' involved in its wholesale US reproduction.

Paladin Press are the suppliers of the four other manuals on sale in London, all prepared originally by the US Army. They include *Improvised Munitions*, a guide to assembling deadly weapons from 'common-place or innocuous' materials. It is dated 1969 and marked 'For Official Use Only', a nicety the publishers readily ignore. It is written and illustrated in the style of handyman magazines: a couple of kitchen items suffice to make plastic explosives; throw in an empty wine bottle, some earth and a drop of petrol and the keen enthusiast can make a 'cone charge' capable of penetrating three or four inches of armour plating. A few bits of wood and metal will make a rifle or small arm: if ordinary ammunition is unavailable, then matches and nails can serve instead. Napalm – a foul weapon invented by US military scientists – can be manufactured from petrol, eggs, animal blood or just about anything else.

It is astonishing that legislation does not prevent the open sale of such a compendium. Parliamentary questions about official inaction to the Home Office, Department of Trade, and Attorney General were tabled yesterday by Robin Cook MP. One way of stopping the sale of home-made bomb manuals would be to prevent their import from the United States. It is unlikely that the same lethargy would be exhibited by the authorities if the same manuals were being offered for sale by British Marxist or anarchist groups.

The Generals fail to exorcise Peronism

A reading of the orthodox press can certainly disclose the fact that the Argentine government is extremely brutal. But it can also create the impression that they govern a cowed and docile population. In fact, the decades of radical politics in Argentina are not easily erased. The tradition of popular resistance is far from dead. *Christopher Roper reports.*

Just before Christmas last year, two French nuns were detained by the security forces in Argentina, sharing the fate of thousands of people who have joined the popular resistance of the military dictatorship. There was an international outcry, with protests coming from the Pope, the government of the United States, and the President of France, but to no avail. The nuns never reappeared and are almost certainly dead.

What the papers did not say at the time was that one of the nuns at least was active in the Montonero Peronist Movement. They had been working closely with the women who protest every Thursday in front of the President's palace in Buenos Aires, demanding news of members of their families who have 'disappeared' into the maw of the security forces. Most of the protesters are mothers of Montoneros, who fully understand that they may share the fate of their children.

In fact, many of the best known victims of the Argentine dictatorship, including Rodolfo Walsh, whose moving open letter to the military junta has been reprinted by human rights organisations all over the world, have been members of the Montonero Peronist Movement. Equally, when the military government accuses 'subversion' of being behind a strike, it probably has a point. With the trade unions under tight military control, it was almost inevitable that clandestine union structures would proliferate.

After 27 months of ruling in Argentina, the military have clearly failed in the first task they set themselves, which was to eliminate the Montoneros from Argentine political life. In fact, it is arguable that the MPM is the most significant element in the growing political resistance to the government. This is not at all evident from British press and television. If the Montoneros are discussed at all, they are seen as a residual military problem, which will shortly be resolved by President Videla. The official Argentine account of the Montoneros as a largely dismembered terrorist organisation, whose leaders have fled into exile in Europe, is generally accepted by visiting reporters.

Part of the illusion is created by tight control of the press, which is not permitted to discuss the Montoneros except in terms of 'subversion' and 'terrorism', which are used interchangeably by the government. This is reinforced by greatly exaggerating the military activities of 'left-wing terrorism' in 1975/76, blurring the crucial political differences between the Montoneros and the People's Revolutionary Army (ERP is the commonly used Spanish acronym), and ignoring the political impact of left peronism in 1973-76.

The ERP, which was a guerrilla army organised along classical marxist-leninist

lines by the Revolutionary Workers Party, was virtually destroyed in 1976, with the killing of its pre-eminent leader Roberto Santucho. Today the party is split among a number of factions arguing about what went wrong. The fatal disability which the ERP was never able to surmount was its lack of a mass base. Although it mounted one of the most effective urban and rural guerrilla operations seen in Latin America since the Cuban revolution, it remained isolated and vulnerable in the face of a concentrated military offensive.

The Montoneros were always a very different proposition. Although they were first organised in the late 1960s as a guerrilla organisation, their aim from the beginning was 'a socialist project within the peronist movement'. They were not the first socialist peronists. Significant sectors of the Communist and Socialist parties supported the nascent peronist movement in 1945, and John William Cook, Peron's representative in Argentina after the 1955 military coup, provided much of the early inspiration for the new directions which peronism took during the 1960s.

But the Montoneros' project was both ambitious and timely. Their greatest successes in the first stage of their development (1968-73) were political rather than military. They concentrated on reorganising the Juventud Peronists, the peronist youth movement. Their success in mobilising young Argentines, not only in schools and universities, but more notably in the shanty towns that ring Argentina's major cities, gave them significant leverage in the two presidential election campaigns of 1973.

It was the Montoneros political ascendancy at this time which allowed them to become a factor of unity on the Left, bring-

ing together almost all the diverse peronist resistance organisations, which had sprung up during the previous seven years of military rule (1966-73), and led them to suppose that they could successfully challenge the cautious leadership of Peron on his return from exile.

In fact, they over-estimated their own strength, and made many mistakes in their confrontations with Peron, whose political guile was more than a match for their revolutionary enthusiasm. Following Peron's death in July 1974, the Montoneros were forced back into clandestine operations, losing much of their popular support in the process. It was not until 1975, almost a year after Peron's death, that the Montoneros began re-building their political bases in earnest. During this period, they began to feel the contradiction between the building of a mass movement and the organisation of clandestine military apparatus.

The relationship between the two was not finally defined until 1977, when they launched the Montonero Peronist Movement. This is a political movement, without any military function. Its secretary general, Mario Eduardo Firmenich, is also secretary general of the Montonero Party, which in turn controls the Montonero army. The leadership of the movement, however, is by no means identical to the leadership of the party. The MPM seeks to reunite the historical peronist movement around Montonero leadership. With this end in mind they have put together an impressive council. Its members include Oscar Bidegáin former governor of Buenos Aires province, Ricardo Obregón Cano, former governor of Córdoba province, Rodolfo Puigross, former rector of Buenos Aires university, and Sylvia Berman, former president of the Argentine college of psychiatry, as well as the more predictable youth and labour leaders.

The political weight of the council explains why the military government dare not call elections. Apart from ex-President Héctor Cámpora, the Montoneros have managed to secure the support of every veteran peronist leader who can claim a significant electoral base. Simple arithmetic shows that they could win at least 300 of the votes in any free election. This also explains why the military junta refuses to grant Cámpora a safe conduct to leave the country. He has been living since April 1976 in the Mexican embassy, where he sought asylum after the coup. He would almost certainly move into the field of influence of the MPM were he allowed to leave Argentina.

This article has sought to emphasise the political significance of the Montoneros, but it should not be taken to mean that they have abandoned armed resistance. They still see their military apparatus as an



essential weapon in their political armoury, but seek to use it selectively. Increasingly, they are professionalising and specialising their military structures. They have largely abandoned the costly set piece operations by which they attracted world attention in 1975. Instead, their armed actions are directly linked to industrial struggles, and to maintaining the necessary infrastructure for clandestine propaganda and labour organisation. They suffered heavy losses in 1976/77, particularly during the first nine months after the coup. Government and Montonero estimates coincide in suggesting they lost up to 80 per cent of their cadres during those months. However, they are now back up to 40 per cent of their March 1976 strength and still growing. Quite significantly, Argentine exiles who abandoned

the organisation when they left the country in 1976 or 1977 are now returning to participate once again in the resistance.

An indication of their growing confidence was given during the week before the World Cup jamboree, when three leaders of the MPM organised a press briefing for leading Latin American and European journalists in Buenos Aires. They met on a number of different occasions over a five-day period, introducing the journalists to leading members of Argentina's resistance movement, including trade union leaders, lawyers, and women involved in the human rights movement. The three Montoneros involved were all well known faces in Argentina, and high on the junta's list of most wanted persons. The meetings indicated a considerable local organisation.

The military continue to insist that they propose to rule Argentina for an indefinite period and that the old political parties will not be permitted to participate in any future scheme of government. All precedent suggests that this is so much eyewash. Argentine military governments do not last long and this one is already more politically isolated than any of its predecessors. Sooner rather than later, elections will be held and once again the political transformation of peronism will be the decisive factor. In recognition of this fact, the military junta itself is already trying to make pacts with right-wing peronist leaders. This might have been an effective tactic in 1976 when Isabel Peron was at the nadir of her unpopularity, but today it is almost impossible to imagine the military regaining the political initiative.

Peter Taylor: **Mason's Men in Plain Clothes Uncovered**

Few British governments in recent times can have received a document as damaging as the Amnesty Report. Having cooperated with Amnesty to 'the fullest possible extent', the authorities no more expected its conclusion that the RUC had maltreated suspects with sufficient frequency to warrant a public inquiry, than they did Scotland to knock in a dozen goals against Holland.

The Northern Ireland Office had played the Amnesty mission with all the skill and expertise born of a decade of dealing with explosive political issues from Bloody Sunday to the illegal interrogation techniques that accompanied the introduction of internment. But defusing the Amnesty Report may be its most difficult job yet. Although the reputations of Amnesty International and the Chief Constable of the RUC are at stake – one recently awarded the Nobel Peace Prize, the other a knighthood – it is, effectively, government policy in Northern Ireland that the Report puts on trial. Since the ending of internment and Roy Mason's sidestep from Defence to N. Ireland, the thrust of government policy has been the defeat of the Provisional IRA. Because internment was politically embarrassing and military 'mopping up' exercises limited to the fantasies of Tory backbenchers, the Government rejected outright military victory in favour of beating the IRA through the courts. The rules were changed. The ensuing emergency legislation made the arrest and conviction of suspected terrorists a matter of course. Basic human rights were suspended in the process. Some senior Belfast QC's now believe that internment was more honest and honourable.

The illusion of justice works. Ninety per cent of cases coming before the special non-jury Diplock courts result in conviction and 80 per cent of these convictions rest solely on confessions of guilt made during police interrogation. It is these plain clothes interrogation teams that are the cutting edge of government policy. This is why the Amnesty Report is explosive: this is why the Government and RUC will do all they

can to discredit its findings. They have made a good start.

The Government's reply is a convincing and reassuring document to anyone unfamiliar with the detailed evidence and analysis the Report contains, let alone the tangled framework of Emergency Provisions, Judges Rules and Complaints Procedures – and 10 pages are easier to read than 70. The announcement of a private inquiry into police practice and procedures ignores Amnesty's unequivocal conclusion that maltreatment has taken place and can only confirm the privately held suspicions of the staunchest loyalists who most want them allayed. In calling for Amnesty to reveal names and details of its 78 cases, the Government is asking Amnesty to break all its traditions whereby it guarantees confidentiality to all its cases whether they be in Chile, Argentina, South Africa or Northern Ireland. Nor is Amnesty in the business of providing material for criminal prosecutions.

Traditionally the authorities have countered allegations of maltreatment with outright denials imputing that anyone who makes them, repeats them or believes them either sympathises with the IRA or is being duped by them. The Government knows it is dangerous to tar Amnesty with the terrorist brush. Its strategy is more subtle: it suggests that Amnesty was conned, that its sources were loaded and its evidence incomplete. Are the authorities suggesting that the 50 medical reports from 40 general practitioners, Catholic and Protestant from all over Northern Ireland were fabrications or inaccurate? The information was incomplete because the authorities refused to make the medical reports of their own police doctors available to the mission although several of the doctors themselves wished them to do so. If the authorities were desperate to give the RUC a clean bill of health and the police doctors' reports did not confirm the GP's reports, it is difficult to believe that some way could not have been found of turning them over to

Amnesty. Perhaps it's not surprising that the condition of the Government's co-operation with the mission was that no individual cases should be discussed.

Fundamental to the Report and the Government's reply is the mission's conclusion that the machinery for investigating complaints against the police for assault during interview is inadequate. Amnesty believes these complaints procedures are elaborate but of no relevance to cases of alleged maltreatment in police custody. This is the territory of the Director of Public Prosecutions. (Amnesty was allowed to see the DPP and his Deputy and given access to the Attorney General's Office.) When the Chief Constable produces impressive statistics to show that the DPP has seen fit to prosecute only a couple of the hundreds of cases brought to his attention, he's using a sleight of hand which Amnesty exposes. The DPP can only prosecute when he has sufficient evidence to convict a particular police officer in court. The investigation is conducted by the RUC's Complaints Branch. Amnesty met its Head. There is no suggestion that these investigations are anything less than thorough but they do have their limitations. It is easy to identify an individual policeman, but very difficult to gather sufficient evidence to convict him in court. In practice the individual policeman has a right to refuse to answer questions and to refuse to sign a statement, rights shared in principle by the suspects he usually interrogates. He also has access to a solicitor, a common law right denied to each of Amnesty's 78 cases. The DPP's function is to decide whether there is a case to prosecute not whether a complaint can be substantiated. Amnesty, in one of its most significant conclusions, finds that complaints alleging maltreatment in police custody may be classified 'unsubstantiated', though the maltreatment alleged may actually have taken place.

In rejecting its call for a public inquiry into the allegations and challenging Amnesty to provide the DPP with details of its 78 cases so that prosecutions can be instituted 'where the evidence justifies it', the Government is trying to get off the hook by resorting to the very system that Amnesty has so clearly exposed. The Government's response is, like the complaints procedures, elaborate and inadequate.

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And if that sounds a bit outlandish, there's a simple explanation: Iran's need to modernise her railway system.

British railway engineers are planning a route that links Teheran to Tabriz near the Russian border.

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Will the Afrikaners fight it out?

This is the second anniversary of Soweto. On 16 June 1976 students in the vast black township outside Johannesburg took to the streets in protest against Bantu education: hundreds were killed by the savage response of the security

forces. Soweto was taken as bloody proof of the invincibility of South African power. ROGER OMOND* reports that in the two years since Soweto the Afrikaner state – while abating nothing of its brutality – is showing signs of disintegration.

It's almost blasphemy to ask the question, but: will the Afrikaner fight? Or will he, grudgingly and almost certainly too late, concede the absolute power that he has maintained at the expense of every other group for three decades?

Most parties interested in the South African impasse base their policies and tactics on the belief that the white ruling class will fight to the bitter end – a belief encouraged by Pretoria, in the hope that the prospects of an all-out war will discourage its opponents. But there are some faint signs that white intransigence and determination to fight it out are not as solid as is believed generally in some London and Washington circles, the committee rooms of the African National and Pan-Africanist congresses, Moscow, the UN and even the streets of Soweto.

Several factors indicate this. One is that 59 per cent of young white South Africans asked for exemption or deferment from military training in 1976. Another comes in the thoughts of the political scientist Andre Du Toit. In a brilliant paper, he suggests that pragmatism could win over ideology when the chips are really down, and draws some kind of parallel (which he says is far from exact) between the surrender of the Boer forces in 1902 and the situation that may soon face Vorster and Co. In his dissent from the contemporary wisdom about the inevitability of an Afrikaner last-ditch stand, Du Toit is joined by a number of other Afrikaner intellectuals.

A further factor suggesting that white South Africa may realise one day that fighting for apartheid is akin to hara kiri is the military arithmetic: there are just too many blacks, supported by a wide range of outside forces, for the whites to win.

This contradicts the despairing white liberal's usual argument that the apartheidists are locked into a situation giving them no escape but to go down fighting and that they lack the imagination or political courage even to conceive another option. It is a view that cannot be ignored – one that I have argued before in the NS. But it may be unduly pessimistic. The white liberal is surrounded daily with evidence of his impo-

tence and with Afrikaner Nationalist intransigence, cruelty and stupidity. It is difficult not to despair, which is why many use their impotence as an excuse for doing nothing or little, why some join revolutionary movements (and generally end up in jail) or why many emigrate.

Most of us have gone through the range, or at least considered the second option and then decided on the third. Emigration is both more comfortable and more tormenting. The advantages of a free society are many and varied – not least being able to write an article like this. And in a country where a white opposition vote is restricted to near-impotence, there is some satisfaction in having voted with your feet: at least Vorster will not be able to claim *my* support in his claim that he speaks for all right-thinking South Africans when that means compliance with his authoritarian ideology.

But it is no longer (if it ever was) the liberal – despairing or otherwise – who will force radical change on South Africa's rulers. Change will come not if apartheid's opponents opt for patient intellectualising (that has been tried for years with no success) but only if the various pressures on Pretoria – political, economic, moral, military and sporting continue to be applied. Looked

at objectively, what few changes there have been in South Africa in recent years have resulted from pressure, however reluctant the white *pro tem* rulers may be to acknowledge this fact. In just one area, that of sport, South Africa today is a rather different place than ten years ago when Vorster banned Basil d'Oliveira from touring with the MCC because he was a mixed race ex-South African. Peter Hain showed how anti-apartheid campaigns can create a climate for change.

In a rather different way, Donald Woods' call for the economic isolation of the country could have a similar effect. The question is whether when all the political, economic, moral and military pressures have been applied, the Afrikaner will still fight to maintain his power and privilege. The optimists say no, and that those making the most bellicose noises now will be among the first to fold.

Some comfort may be drawn from history. In 1902 the Boers were faced with the decision of whether to continue a hopeless struggle against the British Army or whether to surrender and work for a new Afrikaner dawn. Eventually they chose the latter. The difference between then and now, as Andre du Toit has pointed out (in his paper to the University of Cape Town summer school last year), is that then the Afrikaners were virtually powerless. Now they are not. But Du Toit sees some similarities between the debate among the Boer signatories to the Peace of Vereeniging and the crisis now facing Afrikanerdom.

Du Toit distinguishes between two parties in these debates the radical bittereinders and the conciliatory bittereinders: those who saw the maintenance of the two Boer republics as equivalent to the continued existence of the Afrikaner nation versus those who perceived that republican independence was not necessarily the same as national existence. He quotes the South African Republic's Acting President Schalk Burger as then asking:

The question is whether it is better to continue until the people are exterminated, man, woman and child, than to try to come to terms. Or, on the other hand, to continue

***ROGER OMOND** succeeded Donald Woods as South African correspondent of the NEW STATESMAN, after Woods – who subsequently escaped to England – was banned. He worked for ten years with Woods on the liberal *Daily Dispatch* of East London: most recently covering the inquest into the death of Steve Biko. In May, after severe pressure from the security police, he also left South Africa and is now living in London.





until they obtained what they wanted, only to find that the people were extirpated. For whose benefit would the struggle then have been carried on?

The conciliators won, peace was signed and, as Du Toit says, the Treaty of Vereeniging 'was not the end of the Afrikaner people, but can now be seen rather as the prelude to the emergence of a revitalised Afrikaner nationalism and the establishment of Afrikaner hegemony in South Africa'.

Pretoria's present rulers seem committed to the all-or-nothing approach of the radical bittereinders of 1902. But, Du Toit says,

'Those making the most bellicose noises now will be among the first to fold...'

what was decisive in victory for the conciliatory bittereinders during those debates were the desperate conditions and prospects of the non-combatants, most in the British concentration camps or facing abject poverty. Reason and not just emotion was urged on the Boer delegates – and reason eventually won.

Pragmatism for the Afrikaner now means little more than making cosmetic changes to the face of apartheid: relaxation of some so-called petty apartheid measures and changes in terminology like the renaming of the Department of Bantu Administration and Development (widely abbreviated to BAD) to the Department of Plural Relations. But these are early days yet: there is some way to go before the debate in Afrikaner government leadership reaches the point of discussing whether the survival of the Afrikaner rests on the maintenance of apartheid and repression.

Du Toit and many other verligte Afrikaners implicitly endorse the thesis of American political scientist Herbert Adam who says in his book *Modernising Racial Domination* that the view of the Afrikaner as a solid, immovable character ignores the spoils of three decades of absolute power, the corruption through control of the fleshpots of state capitalism and the thinning religious veneer. '... The majority of the 2½ million "mini-despots" has now become as unprincipled, opportunistic and pragmatic as

their shrewder, profit-grabbing English speaking antagonists,' says Adam. Their conflict becomes negotiable 'if confronted by equal forces'.

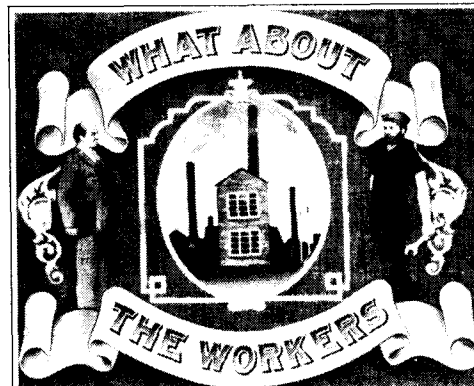
And there's the rub. What constitutes equal forces? To what extent will the Afrikaners be prepared to negotiate? At what stage will Pretoria opt for conciliation? Will Afrikanerdom remain monolithic? Will the English-speaking people continue to give their Afrikaans-speaking rulers electoral support and continue to be prepared to let their sons die in defence of apartheid? How many Afrikaners will let their sons die for the same unwinnable cause?

Even at this stage, there does not appear to be much overwhelming desire to fight: in 1976 a total of 63,104 young men were called up for Defence Force duties and of these 37,518 – a staggering 59 per cent – applied for exemption or deferment. Only 9.9 per cent were granted exemption but 87 per cent got deferment, one of the most usual causes being university study. (They will still have to serve later though.) In the same year 3,814 men failed to report for military service and 507 were convicted. There are no figures for the number of men who left the country to avoid the draft. But the case of two Natal conscripts who sought refugee status in Britain because they were determined not to 'fight for white supremacy in a civil war created by apartheid' attracted wide publicity in South Africa.

A military official in the predominantly English-speaking city of East London has said privately that he has more trouble tracking down Afrikaans-speaking draft dodgers than English ones. Conversely, an increasing number of middle-class English-speaking parents of male teenagers who will be due to fight for apartheid in a couple of years time are inquiring about emigration.

All this, and especially the application rate for deferment or exemption, hardly indicates young South Africa's burning desire for confrontation on the battlefield or in the streets of the black townships. There is a large degree of compulsion about military service backed up with heavy penalties: another indication, perhaps, that Pretoria is not as confident of its white backing as it claims. Just about every white South African boy is now being called up for compulsory two years national service. In contrast, during World War II when South Africa provided one of the largest volunteer armies per size of population to fight the Nazis, there was no conscription.

Conscientious objection to fighting for apartheid is only marginally more popular than the cause of communism, long banned in South Africa. Old blood-and-thunder P. W. Botha hastily amended the already-restrictive Defence Act three and a half



Industrial democracy: where do we stand?

The Bullock Report and the Government White Paper have already set out proposals for worker directors, which may be implemented in the near future. The debate is under way, and it is up to us to make up our minds, both for Britain and for ourselves.

To clarify the issues, Thames Television begin an important new series today called 'What About The Workers'. It will look at schemes already in operation, at projects under discussion and at the experience of industrial democracy abroad. By going into board rooms and onto the shop floor, 'What About The Workers' will discover what 'industrial democracy' really means.

Two of the chief protagonists of the debate, Len Murray of the TUC and Sir John Methven of the CBI, will put their points of view on an issue which affects all of us, not only through our work and livelihood, but through the future prosperity of our country.

What About The Workers
from Thames Television
on Thursdays at 10.40
from 15 June on ITV



years ago after the South African Council of Churches called on Christians to consider whether Christ's call to identify with the oppressed did not involve becoming conscientious objectors. The new Act made it even more difficult to discuss conscientious objection, let alone counsel troubled teenagers about to go off fighting for apartheid. Maximum penalty for contravention: a £3,000 fine or six years in jail.

Just over a year ago the Catholic Bishops Conference asked for alternative forms of national service for those who viewed their call-up as participation in unjust oppression. The Government maintained a frosty silence.

Conscientious objection to killing is not recognised in the Defence Act as grounds for exemption, although those who can prove their religious bona fides usually serve in non-combatant roles. But those whose scruples do not allow them to put on uniform are jailed. Botha's treatment of those who differentiate between a just and unjust war does not seem to indicate much confidence in the morality of apartheid.

On the other hand, defence is a top priority and the politicians have found that whipping up a war psychosis can be useful electorally. Last year's election campaign was fought largely on the supposed threat to white identity by overseas forces and 'internal agitators': the white electorate obligingly gave the Government the biggest-ever Parliamentary majority (now 135 seats or 82 per cent), versus the combined opposition total of 30. Botha himself displays what a fellow-Afrikaner, Progressive Federal Party MP Van Zyl Slabbert, once called 'a blood lust that would make Count Dracula look like a Highveld mosquito'. The Defence Force takes a major slice of the national budget: £1,000 million in 1976, representing 19 per cent of the total and 5.1 per cent of the gross domestic.

While the financing for defence is there, an imponderable in any decision to continue fighting for apartheid would be the extent to which South Africa would tolerate high casualties among the white forces. The country has had it relatively easy on the battleground: in the two years from April 1975, 33 security force members were killed, according to a Defence Department White Paper on fighting in the 'operational area' of Namibia against Swapo guerillas. Initially victims of the war were given heroes' funerals: now there are too many deaths and Pretoria seems to have appreciated that massive publicity for every serviceman killed could become counter-productive. Significantly, no figures are ever given for wounded and South African newspapers are barred from reporting about the maimed.

Rhodesian white intransigence began to melt when the cost in white lives of the war against the black nationalists was appreciated: 403 security force members and 113 white civilians killed from 1972 up to 20 October last year. Given a war of Rhodesian intensity, Pretoria would have to figure on a vastly-increased death rate. Historically, the Boers, because of their small numbers, avoided pitched battles with the British Army during the two Anglo-Boer wars and were horrified by Britain's readiness to tolerate high casualties for minimal advantages. Now the battle order has



The Peace of Vereeniging in 1902 ended the second Anglo-Boer war: a peace which destroyed the two independent Boer republics, but not the base of Afrikaner power. The surrender was preceded by agonised debates between the pragmatists and the fanatics among the Boer generals: inside South Africa, parallels are beginning to be drawn between 1902 and the present situation.

changed and it is Swapo guerillas who are avoiding open battle. But many speeches by the Nationalist politicians remind their listeners that 'South Africa is a small nation'. It could be that a too-high death rate would not be tolerated by white South Africa. Already there have been some murmurings among white parents on just how their children have died: military censorship and at least one cover-up effort have not reassured parents.

Occasionally restive, too, are some members of the top military brass. A few of the more senior and self-confident generals talk vaguely about the dual role necessary to win a war in which many, if not the majority of black South Africans will be on the opposite side. These military men talk about the need to win the proverbial hearts and minds of the people. Mao's dictum about guerrillas (or 'terrorists' as they are now almost universally called) being like fish swimming in a friendly environment appears fairly regularly in the generals' speeches.

Vaguely in the back of some white liberals' minds is the possibility of a military coup – or at least the stage being reached when the senior career officers tell Vorster and Co. that a war in defence of apartheid cannot be won. Spinola Mark II? Certainly the military should have more sense than the politicians who found a war psychosis so useful in last 30 November's general election. Military coups are an African tradition, runs one despairing liberal argument clutching for a far-fetched hope. Why should the tradition stop at the Limpopo River?

Not many Afrikaners are thinking that way. Nor are the thousands of English-speaking whites who supported the National Party in such numbers last year and who are junior partners in the political power structure. Curiously, however, it is some Afrikaners who are doing most of the new thinking, despite the rigidities imposed on them by the party bosses. The mini-debates about the future of the Afrikaner is usually sparked off by a troubled academic

and although Afrikanerdom is still generally monolithic, the dissent indicates some strains. In May 1976 Rhodes University psychology professor Dreyer Kruger said there were reasons not only to expect the downfall of the Afrikaner but actually to welcome it. Nine months later he called on Afrikaners to bring about radical change, even at the risk of being arrested. At the same time Pretoria historian F. A. van Jaarsveld (once considered the leading Afrikaner historian with a distinct pro-Nationalist leaning in his writing) said that apartheid had brought the Afrikaner to the end of the road. More recently self-exiled author Laurens van de Post said he feared

'... blood lust that would make Count Dracula look like a Highveld mosquito'

greatly for the future of his people: 'Unless he realises that the future can only be assured by sharing power, the Afrikaner is doomed.'

Intellectuals like these are supposed to breathe faith into Nationalist ideology and to provide the moral base of apartheid. When they deviate, the reaction from the politicians is fierce: they are portrayed as hensoppers (literally handsuppers) if not verraiers (traitors). The dissidents are growing in numbers, despite the best efforts of men like hardline Nationalist MP Daan van der Merwe who said people like he were the only true Afrikaners and the 'rich intellectual types' were manipulators of Afrikaner religion.

The ferocity with which the intellectual rebels are greeted betrays deep unease. So does the fact that blacks are being brought into the Defence Force in greater numbers: Coloureds (mixed race) and Indians will have compulsory national service in the not-too-distant future. The Chief of the Defence Force, General Magnus Malan, has revealed that more than 20 per cent of the forces in the 'operational area' are blacks.

The blunt fact, of course, is that four million whites – even if all were convinced of the moral rectitude of fighting for apartheid – cannot do battle with the allegedly communist inspired guerrillas on the borders while policing a restive black population at the same time. Even P. W. Botha can do his arithmetic, despite the deep reservations of having to depend on blacks to protect white lives.

Equally important is that the Bothas of South Africa are almost classic cases of psychological insecurity who feel (perhaps correctly) that when the chips are down they will be on their own. The strident appeals to the West that South Africa is protecting the Cape sea route and that it has minerals vital to the free world have fallen on deaf ears. The rhetoric along these lines has been replaced with Vorster's ill-considered election challenge to the West to do its damndest. But behind this bluster and talk of the Jews committing suicide in ancient times rather than surrendering (the clear implication being the delightful prospect of a 20th century Afrikaner repeat performance), lies deep unease. The Afrikaner beat ill-armed blacks in a series of 19th century wars and held off the British Army for some years at the turn of the century, but this time the situation is different. Now the Afrikaners face the world. And they are a small nation.

Although constant appeals are being made to Afrikaners to remember their past military successes, history is being misused for propaganda purposes. No mention is made of the fact that the Afrikaners are not as immobile in adversity as is claimed. The Great Trek was prompted by unwillingness to accept what they considered unpalatable government. And when Natal, for example, was annexed by the British, they trekked again. After the first and second Anglo-Boer wars, hundreds if not thousands abandoned 'their' country for Rhodesia, Kenya and South America.

More recently a group of extreme Right-wing Herstigte Nasionale Party supporters sent a team to Bolivia to investigate resettling there in the event of Vorster selling out the white man, as they quaintly put it. For a nation that protests it has no other home but South Africa (and uses this as the rationale for repression) the Afrikaners can be curiously mobile.

What worries many Afrikaners (even in the National Party) – and which may become a more important factor when it comes to *die volk's* decision whether to fight for apartheid or not – is the isolation of the leadership from the rank and file. The leadership, particularly at cabinet rank, tends to move in a closed circle of like-minded Afrikaners. Their lives are confined often to their plush homes in Pretoria; their offices of state in the Union Buildings;

the parliamentary session in Cape Town where the presence of more than 100 ambitious backbenchers is enough to stall any qualms; a couple of party congresses where they are greeted as heroes and bedecked with ornate buttonholes by over-awed schoolgirls; riding around in chauffeur-driven black Cadillacs or Mercedes-Benzes to an exclusive Afrikaner club and Broederbond

'What worries Afrikaners is the isolation of the leadership from the rank and file'

meeting. The party has become an end in itself; the maintenance of power being no less important than the wellbeing of *die volk daar buite*. If Nixon was an imperial President, Vorster and Co. are not far behind. Allegations of corruption in high places are being made more frequently, the Rhodie highhandedness in running the Department of Information another indication that the leaders have developed a contempt for standards accepted even by the obedient caucus.

And it may be having an effect. Psephologists (particularly on the opposition side) pointed in April to the Springs by-election result that saw a large swing away from the National Party when it was least expected as an indication of some more Afrikaner restiveness.

The optimists – there are not many left in South Africa now – feel that on this evidence and just a gut-feeling, that when the crunch comes, South Africa will develop its own version of white Rhodesia's chicken run. They may just be right. But in the interval there will be more bellicose rhetoric and more deaths on both sides. Vorster will continue to fudge the issues in South Africa as the problems of Namibia and Rhodesia dominate the headlines. There will be more 'concessions' on petty apartheid and Pretoria will use its new constitutional plan to include tame Coloured and Indian leaders in a sham decision-making process as a propaganda weapon. No doubt people like Patrick Wall will be impressed.

The key to solving the South African impasse is the maintenance of pressure from as many sources as possible until Pretoria is confronted by what Herbert Adam called 'equal forces'. It is impossible to say just when that stage will be reached. But when it is, the Afrikaner, as the senior partner in the white political power structure, may indeed decide that the conflict is negotiable and opt for pragmatism – which will mean the surrender of absolute political power although the maintenance of some economic muscle – rather than go down fighting.

CLOSE ENCOUNTER OF THE CULTURAL KIND

This week in the Times Higher Education Supplement A.H. Halsey contributes his own personal assessment of *Encounter*, the idiosyncratic but influential right-wing monthly. The first of an occasional series on the magazines that shape our cultural outlook.

Also in this week's issue:

Two polytechnic directors, Terence Miller of North London and Patrick Nuttgens of Leeds, give their contrasting views of the future of the polytechnics.

Dr. Robert Lowe, Dean of St. George's Hospital Medical School, on medical education under siege.

On sale at newsagents, price 20p.

THE TIMES
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SUPPLEMENT.

Christopher Hird: How the opticians cash in on our poor eyesight

Few businesses make so much money behind such impressive restrictive practices as Britain's opticians. Even fewer have the enviable experience of the opticians of being investigated by the Price Commission, gently rapped over the knuckles, and then let off virtually scot-free by the Labour government. In 1977 – the first complete year of trading since the publication of the Price Commission Investigation into the Price of Spectacles – Dolland & Aitchison, Britain's biggest opticians, managed to increase profits to an impressive 25 per cent.

Almost half Britain's population wears spectacles. All but a handful get a free sight test from their optician, who then receives a fee from the government. Over four-fifths of spectacles dispensed every year have NHS lenses in them. The price of these and NHS frames are controlled by the government. But only 30 per cent of spectacles have NHS frames. The opticians make their big money out of the remaining 70 per cent, which use private frames.

Last week UK Optical – who make about 75 per cent of the NHS frames and

are the largest makers of private frames – showed that the largest profits are not in the manufacturing. On sales of £30 million in 1977/78 they made £2½ million. Compare that with Dollond and Aitchison who in 1977 made pre-tax profits of £5,606,000 on sales of £23,437,000. Owned by the US tobacco company American Brands, through their UK offshoot Gallahers, Dollond has an eighth of the UK spectacles market.

Reporting in August 1976, the Price Commission reckoned that opticians were able to make this sort of money because there was no competition, patients could not shop around and the pricing system was chaotic, with some opticians just charging what the market would bear.

To put things right the Price Commission wanted price lists for spectacle frames to be prominently displayed. The opticians said they did not mind putting them up inside their shops, but would not do so in the shop windows. Indeed, anyone who does so is liable to be struck off the register by the General Optical Council. Prices minister, Mr Roy Hattersley pleaded with the opticians, but to no avail.

The opticians said that they had no objection in principle to patients being told they could take their prescription elsewhere after an eye test, but they also made it quite clear that they thought continuity of eye care was important. Only a hopeless optimist would leave people suffering from such professional schizophrenia to tell patients of their rights. But that's what the government did.

The Price Commission realized one of the ways to put pressure on the profits made from private spectacle frames was to improve the range of National Health Service frames and make opticians stock the full range. The Health ministry says it would be too expensive to expand the range of NHS frames and their plan to make it a condition of an optician's contract with the NHS to stock the full range of existing frames is still – two years later – being discussed.

Other Price Commission suggestions have bitten the dust. They wanted an easy-to-understand price system with patient's bills showing a prescription fee, the cost of the spectacles and a fee for the optician's operating costs. The opticians successfully opposed this, but did agree that patients' bills would give a breakdown of the statutory NHS charge for lenses and the charge for the rest of the spectacles. In March last year we were told that the Department of Health was discussing with the opticians ways of better informing patients about charges. A pamphlet is expected soon.

Nicola Squire: Rights of appeal: the Home Office strikes again

What is Merlyn Rees up to? He seems to have pioneered a new Home Office tactic of Catch 22, whereby certain immigrants can only appeal against their deportation once the deportation has actually taken place. Two recent cases illustrate this great British contribution to human rights year. *Ukucku v Secretary of State for the Home Department* and *Aslan v the same august person* were heard on 6 June by the Court of Appeal.

Declarations were sought against the Home Secretary's order to deport two immigrants prior to their appeals being heard by the Court of Appeal. Both men have been in custody for months because the Home Secretary 'formed the view', that they were illegal entrants, as defined by S33 (1) of the Immigration Act 1971.

Actions were brought in the Divisional Court for Certiorari to quash the Home Office detention order and for Habeas Corpus against the respective governors of the prisons where the two are detained. In the *Ukucku* case the application was refused on the basis that the applicant was an illegal entrant, the Home Office having formed the view that he was one.

The Home Secretary's action in trying to deport the applicants pending their appeals is worrying. As was pointed out in the Court

of Appeal, Nigeria and Pakistan, (the respective destinations of the two detainees) are certainly outside the jurisdiction of the British Courts. The Home Office said they might be prepared, and then in Court declared that they would guarantee, to fly the two back if their appeals succeed. Yet they have no jurisdiction to do so and no power to pay the return passage of the deportee. Premature deportation therefore would effectively deprive them of their right to appeal a vital point of law. It would certainly actually deprive them of their right to appeal against the Divisional Court's refusal to issue the Writ of Habeas Corpus, since Habeas Corpus can only issue against the person holding them in detention. The Court of Appeal did not make declarations against the Home Secretary, but accepted Home Office guarantees that the two would not be deported prior to their appeals, which are to be expedited and held within three or four weeks.

The judiciary in their interpretation of the Act and the powers of the Home Secretary under it seem to be regressing to the bad days of the 1950s, prior to the long line of cases (of which *Ridge v Baldwin* 1964 AC 40 is a notable example), of removing the Home Secretary's action from the ambit of judicial review, at least insofar as

immigration matters are concerned.

In *R v Secretary of State for Home Department ex parte Hussain* (Weekly Law Report May 19 1978) it was held 'that notwithstanding that an applicant had set up a prima facie case that he had permission to stay in this country indefinitely, if, on the evidence as a whole, the court was satisfied that the Secretary of State had reasonable ground for coming to the conclusion that the applicant was in the country illegally, in contravention of the terms of the Immigration Act 1971, the court would not interfere with the Secretary of State's decision.' This principle was further extended in *R v Secretary of State for Home Department and Another ex parte Chendary* (Time Law Report May 23 1978) where it was stated, that 'detention (in circumstances such as the present) was throughout a matter in the discretion of the Secretary of State and if he was acting bona fide on reasonable grounds the court would not intervene'.

It seems therefore that if the Home Secretary 'forms a view' that someone is an illegal entrant, that is enough to keep him in detention for the three months or so it can take for a Habeas Corpus or Certiorari application to come to Court. And then the Courts may decline to interfere with the Home Secretary's exercise of his discretion if he acts on 'reasonable grounds'. What those reasonable grounds are do not, it would seem, have to be stated, so there is no effective judicial review of a Home Secretary's or indeed a Home Office official's whim.

Westminster Diary

□ Denis Healey's touch on the tiller last week, though a blow to prospective home owners, was a salutary check on incipient Labour euphoria over the coming election. The enthusiastic forecasts which were beginning to float Labour effortlessly through to its third victory running, were, for me, all too reminiscent of 1970. The same props were there: a popular PM, an uptight Tory leader, a nice looking economic recovery, smiling polls. We just had to go into the election with muted politics and straight faces and we couldn't lose. The fact that with all these good omens we lost after all was something to do with credibility – as to the future rather than the past. Our own supporters were unconvinced of our intention to do anything other than merely manage the economy. I suspect that this time round our perceived intentions will be equally relevant. Our increasingly popular PM is rumoured to be intent on writing the manifesto himself, to exclude, no doubt, anything with too radical a smack about it. True, his popularity rests on a somewhat solid base than his predecessor's – reliable uncle rather than cheeky chappie – and it might well happen that by acting like a cross between Stanley Baldwin and Winston Churchill, he could pick up not only Liberal votes, but a good few Tory ones as well. But such a victory would not solve the problem of what to *do* after he had won; everyone knows now that Labour governments have the guts, when necessity and the IMF dictate, to cut public spending and control the unions; what many Labour supporters (whose votes are also important) are less sure about is our 1974 commitment to a 'massive and irreversible shift in power and resources to the working people of Britain.' I wonder if *that* will find its way into the PM's first manifesto draft.

□ Something Labour might try to avoid next time round is the entrenchment of privilege in the upper slices of the layer cake which British society so persistently resembles. It is not just that we fail to attack this privilege by opting out of our promises – like the wealth tax – which might have had some effect in eroding it. We positively bolster it. Under Wilson, we established top civil service salaries and pensions at a level well above those in industry; then with a little help from Lord Goodman, gave the extraordinary pledge that we would guarantee the private health sector and last week I extracted from the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence the information that our private school system is now *directly* subsidised by the taxpayer to the tune of £37m. (This is over and above nearly £40m. from local authorities and an unspecified amount from charitable status and various tax avoidance schemes which are estimated to bring the public subsidy over the £120m. mark.) It was instructive to see five pages of Hansard taken up with a list of the 300-odd schools our diplomats' offspring attend, from Eton and Harrow to

the Convent of the Faithful Companions of Jesus. There is a promise in Labour's programme to have a look at all these privileges, but even the National Executive has never been committed to any radical action on private education. There was some hope of at least a little scrutiny of the system, when Wilson handed over the diplomatic service to a Think Tank enquiry three years ago, but when they got down to the job they found that 'conditions of service' had been carefully excluded from the terms of reference. So who is in charge of this particular racket? After a deal of digging, I find it is my old friend Fred Peart, Lord Privy Seal and overlord of the civil service. I first met him at a Labour Party conference 20 years ago when he was moving a resolution to abolish the public schools entirely. He was thwarted on that occasion by Hugh Gaitskell who persuaded the National Union of Mineworkers to switch their vote at the last minute and save these venerable institutions. But now he has his chance at last. Over to you, Fred.

□ I do not expect foreign affairs to be much of an election issue. With EEC membership in a shambles and interest in Africa confined almost exclusively to a numbers game of white expatriates massacred or saved, Britain is more introspective at the moment than at any time in recent memory. For all the talk of human rights begun by Carter, consciousness of the realities of military dictatorship is increasingly blunted in both the capitalist and the communist West, as each bloc exploits its chosen pieces of the third and fourth world with impartially cynical arms sales. So I particularly welcome *Juntas United* by Peter Chipendale (of the *Guardian*) and Ed Harriman (Quartet Books £1.95). It is a macabre pictorial tour through the 34 nastiest military regimes in the world from Argentina to Zaïre, with short but gory details about their indigenous bosses and arms-dealer patrons. But there seems little hope of respite for the people of Africa. John Davies, the shadow foreign secretary, came out with the extraordinary suggestion in last week's foreign affairs debate, to turn the Lomé Convention into a sort of military pact, an idea which seems to have been germinated at the recent Euro-conservative meeting in Bavaria. It would have the effect of turning over the whole continent to client, military puppets and eliminating the few genuine democracies, like Botswana and the Ivory Coast, which have managed to survive so far.

□ The happening I am most looking forward to in the immediate future is an appearance before the Committee of Privileges over the Col. B. affair: in the event I suspect Col. B. may get quite lost, as our senior prefects try to thread their way through the intricacies of privilege, the sub-judice rule and the origins of the Official Secrets Act. I suppose I ought to be frightened: 30 years ago, led by Hartley Shawcross in a hanging mood, they expelled Garry Allaghan from Parliament, for combining a little journalism with his parliamentary duties – or, as they put it, leaking secrets for money from the Parliamentary Labour Party. But now the PLP doesn't

have any secrets any more, though the Committee of Privileges itself still prefers to sit in private. There remains one dilemma: some of my colleagues are musing as to whether they should hire proper lawyers to defend them against the onslaught of the Attorney General, who acts for the Committee in a sort of prosecuting role. I am inclined not to bother: I am sure I shall be no match for the forensic acumen and rapier wit of Sam Silkin, but I have always been a bit of a barrister *manqué*. I'd love to have a go, and see how I do. I hope to keep NEW STATESMAN readers informed on developments.

□ One of the most pleasant privileges of MPs is the occasional meeting with a world statesman as he makes a courtesy call at the House of Commons on his way through London. Last week's visit of Morarji Desai was the most memorable so far. In a small crowded room, with our PM squashed in the audience, Mr Desai exuded a unique and winning serenity. 'Was he happy with his relations with China?' 'He was always happy.' 'Weren't there problems in India?' 'There were always problems, but only out of adversity did one reach prosperity.' So it went on, in a tiny voice which compelled absolute silence and rapt attention – especially from Mr Callaghan who, for a few moments, was clearly a student at the feet of his master.

□ I am sure Mr Desai would approve of the *Asian*, a new English language magazine, dedicated to multiracialism, which focuses on the problems of all British citizens from the Indian sub-continent. It has some important things to say about the Bengali community in Spitalfields, the latest scene of National Front violence, and makes a particular plea for the community's secondary school, Robert Montefiore, to be kept open. It is a hard decision for the Inner London Education Authority, which has always set its face against ghetto schools. But ILEA also has a policy for community schools – and this community now needs all the help it can get to defend itself against racist violence. If only for that reason I hope ILEA gives the school a guaranteed extended life.

Christopher Price MP.

This England

Prizes: £3 book token for first entry, £2 tokens for others printed. Paste entries on a postcard

□ Meanwhile Mr Charles Alexander, a 26-year-old sculptor, attempted an unorthodox way of keeping cool by plunging 25ft into a 1,000-gallon vat of banana custard. The stunt was part of a festival in Liverpool to celebrate the work of the psychologist Carl Jung. – *Guardian* (J. Diesbach)

□ The two High Constables for Lichfield, Staffs, report that their wooden truncheons, issued in the reign of King William IV, have death watch beetle and could no longer be used. – *Daily Express* (Keith Sharp)

Anna Coote: Hellbent on destroying the Domestic Violence Act

'Some judges are hellbent on destroying this legislation', one barrister commented angrily at a conference held last Saturday to assess the first year of the Domestic Violence Act. It seemed by all accounts that the power of this new law to protect women from their violent menfolk depended entirely on the attitudes of those who administered it – not only judges, but police and lawyers too.

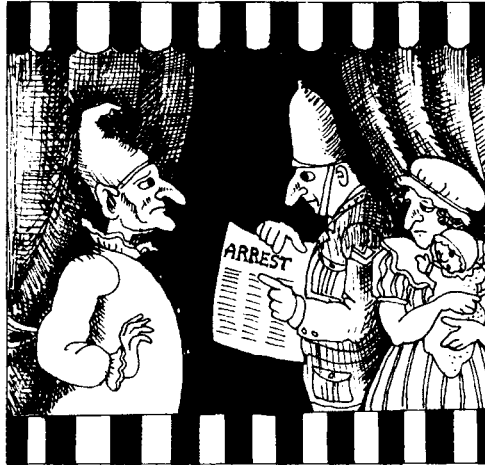
The Act made it possible for a woman to apply directly to the county court for an injunction ordering her husband or co-habitee to stop molesting her or her children, or to stay away from the home (depending on the circumstances). It also enabled the judge to attach a power of arrest to the injunction if he was satisfied that the man had caused 'actual bodily harm' and was likely to do it again.

Before the Act came into force in June 1977, married women had to start divorce proceedings before they could apply for an injunction, which was often too drastic a step. If a man disobeyed a court order, the police had no duty to arrest him: it was up to the woman to get him summoned to court and to ask the judge to commit him – a long, complicated business which left her in danger of further assault. On paper, therefore, the Domestic Violence Act improved the procedure considerably.

Most of the people who attended the conference had practical experience of the new law, as lawyers, social workers and representatives from Women's Aid refuges. Their reports revealed wide discrepancies in the way it worked. In some areas, notably Colchester, Taunton, Bristol and Exeter,

judges were most reluctant to attach power of arrest unless the woman had been very seriously injured. 'Black eyes and lacerations aren't enough' said one woman from Bristol. 'They want broken limbs too.' In law, 'actual bodily harm' means any physical damage and should apply to bruises, scratches and cuts.

Police attitudes varied widely too. Some were helpful, but at one police station a woman who turned up with severe bruising, having been beaten up with a broom handle, was told to go home and make it up with her husband. In another case, police took ten days to arrest a man who had disobeyed an injunction, even though he returned to his home and used violence several times during the interval. There were reports about a number of solicitors



Drawing reprinted by permission of Inter-Action & NCCL

who didn't understand how to use the new law. One woman at a refuge in Slough had to wait seven weeks for a non-molestation order, although the process need take no longer than 24 hours. These complaints were typical of many raised throughout the day.

Latest figures from the Lord Chancellor's office show that a total of 4,620 injunctions were applied for under Section 1 of the Domestic Violence Act from June 1977 to April 1978. Of those, 348 were refused altogether and 1,201 were granted with power of arrest attached. Unfortunately the figures don't reveal in how many of the 3,071 cases where injunctions were granted, without power of arrest, the judge refused an application to attach it. A total of 384 men were arrested under the Act, of whom 120 were sent to prison. Again, these figures don't show how many men went on disobeying injunctions without incurring the appropriate legal consequences.

There were worrying allegations about the way in which the Domestic Violence Act had been used to skirt around the new Housing (Homeless Persons) Act. Many people at the conference reported a hardening of attitudes among local authority housing officers – who seemed to be panicking about the extent of their new duties. Faced with a battered woman who wanted to be rehoused at a safe distance from her husband, they would urge her to go back home and apply for an exclusion order under the DVA. The trouble was that exclusion orders did not always keep the man away. If the woman then left home again to avoid assault, some housing departments took the view that she was 'voluntarily homeless' and not eligible for rehousing.

The three groups which organised the conference, the National Women's Aid Federation, NCCL and Rights of Women, will be drawing up a list of proposals for reforming the law and providing more refuges, based on the evidence they collected on Saturday.

Letters to the Editor

Richard Nixon's Version

Sir, Many Americans who live in London, including the undersigned, are great admirers of the writing of Clive James so it is with regret that one must protest that Mr James's review (NS 9 June) of Richard Nixon's autobiography is about as far off the beam as it is possible to get. Mr James is totally uninstructed about American political life, and so has failed to realize that the important thing about Nixon's memoirs is not what he has put into them, but what he has left out.

Mr James is unaware that Nixon had a crony named Murray Chotiner, now dead, who invented the famous 'dirty tricks' which Nixon began employing in his first two campaigns as soon as he entered politics after World War II. One of these tricks was to get the Republican party workers to telephone registered voters at four in the morning, pretending to be drunk, and urge them to vote for the Democratic candidate. Another trick used later on was to steal the opponent's stationery and send out letters written on it which were either sexually offensive or which outlined some wildly impossible political proposal.

When you are playing dirty and your opponent is not, you can scarcely help forging ahead, but this does not constitute either 'political intelligence', or 'knowing American society and politics from the ground up' – as Mr James, unaware of the *modus operandi*, mistakenly assumes.

Of the famous Checkers speech when Eisenhower was running for President in 1952, Mr James says, 'Certainly the attack over his [Nixon's] supposed misuse of campaign funds must have hurt: his first response was the horribly maladroit 'Checkers' speech . . .'

The actuality was that Nixon was shown beyond all dispute to have accepted a bribe of \$18,000 from a group of California businessmen to promote their interests in Congress. He got himself out of the situation by giving a speech in which he maintained that this bribe-taking was as innocent as his two little daughters accepting a puppy which had been sent to him by an admirer. The Checkers speech was not 'horribly maladroit'. It was naked, barefaced falsification and a repulsive manipulation of emotion.

What, in this instance, has happened to the

healthy scepticism and wonderful mocking humour readers enjoy so much in Clive James's television reviews? Why did Mr James not check with other sources before solemnly accepting Nixon's asseveration that he did not use his high office to line his own pockets? (He tried to, but was stopped. To a certain extent.) The 'human dignity' which Mr James finds in Nixon's memoirs is a mere cosmetic job, and the monument Tricky Dicky leaves behind him after 30-odd years of political life is not detente, but rather something tragic – namely, the mongrelisation of American ethics.

MARGARET HALSEY

33 Greencroft Gardens
London NW6

Arab Understanding

Sir, Mr David Gilmour (NS Letters 9 June) accuses Mr David Jacobs (Letters 19 May) of being tendentious, which is defined by the Concise Oxford Dictionary as 'having an underlying purpose, calculated to advance a cause.' It is a charge which Mr Jacobs would no doubt be happy to accept. But it is a peculiar turn of phrase to be applied by an officer of the Council of the Advancement of Arab-British Understanding, endeavouring to uphold an opposite point of view. I have re-read Mr Jacob's letter, which, in case your readers have

forgotten, was in response to the long intemperate article by Professor Said, carrying the banner for the PLO, and who used the Kafr Kassim incident as conclusive proof of the general wickedness of the Israelis.

Mr Jacobs' point – and this is borne out by the record – was that Kafr Kassim shocked the people of Israel and produced a public outcry, virtually led by David Ben Gurion himself. Those responsible were duly and heavily punished, and any reprieve in their sentences at a later date was properly in keeping with the penal review practices in all civilised countries. (Does Mr Gilmour think it wrong, even if it is generally unpopular, that Lord Longford tries to obtain clemency for Myra Hindley and others?)

The officer in overall command indeed did receive only a nominal penalty, but this was because although he was considered technically culpable, the behaviour of those under him was without his knowledge and contrary to express instructions in his command concerning the treatment of civilians. Too many pro-Arabists in this country seem more concerned to produce Arab-Israeli-cum British misunderstanding rather than finding those issues which illustrate cooperation and hope. This was the plea with which Mr Jacobs concluded his original letter to you. I should like to re-echo it, in the hope that it may now receive a positive response.

ADAM KAYE

34 Elm Tree Road
London NW8

The Interests of Building Societies

Sir, Your leader on Building Societies (NS 9 June) hit the nail on the head. I was offered a provisional 100 per cent mortgage by my building society in January because I have been an 'investor' for 2 years (a share account with never more than £250.00 in it). I was told to find a property less than 15 years old and under £8,300 for the deal to be clinched but having found a maisonette I liked I found that the building society had grossly undervalued it and refused a full mortgage on the grounds that it was a flat, it was near a council estate, and it fronted straight onto the road. This information was, of course, not strictly allowable to me as one is not supposed to know anything about the valuation, even though one pays for it.

Clearly building societies are making what amounts to social policy decisions of this kind every day and there seems to me to be little chance of achieving a coherent housing policy in this country unless and until the societies are nationalised. Then perhaps houses can be bought and valued on known criteria rather than the hidden agenda of prejudices and financial conservatism which control the actions of the building societies at the present time.

IAN C. H. HAWKINSON

260 Walsall Road
Bridgtown
Cannock
Staffs.

IBM Reply Again

Sir, While I am reluctant to prolong the debate with Mr Campbell, I feel I must respond to his latest demonstration (NS 2 June) of an inability to distinguish between fact and fiction.

Having described the Rex Malik book as a work largely of fiction, I did not think it necessary also to deny its accuracy. Secondly, Mr Campbell seems to have overlooked the fact that a large proportion of all companies' profits are paid to the government in the form

of corporate taxes. British Industry paid more than £4 billion last year. In our own case, in 1977 we paid £38m corporate taxes on previous years' profit and made provision for £53m. to be paid in subsequent years. Contrary to Mr Campbell's view, clearly this is a benefit to the UK. Finally, Mr Campbell repeats his insinuation that the 95 per cent employee vote in favour of retaining the present IBM management system was due to a 'terrific internal propaganda campaign'. All I can add to my previous comments is that he seriously underestimates the intelligence of IBM's employees. Had we conducted the kind of campaign alleged, they would have told us of the error of our ways in no uncertain terms. And ACAS most certainly would have commented on it in their report.

E. R. NIXON
Managing Director

IBM
North Harbour
Portsmouth
Hampshire

Wave Energy

Sir, A misprint has decimated (to the power of six) the amount of electricity in the waves: my article last week should have referred to 12 gigawatts and not 12 kilowatts. I sympathise. Gigawatt is the sort of word that makes people's eyes glaze over. Even the experts are divided over how to pronounce it. A gigawatt is 1,000 megawatts and 1,000,000 kilowatts. The CEBG's present installed capacity is 60 GW and our average consumption is below 30 GW. Hence the calculation that 120 GW of potential energy is roughly five times our normal needs. May I also make it clear that the £2.5m. was the total Government grant and did not all go to Stephen Salter.

DAVID ROSS

55 Ruskin Park House
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Fifty Years of Full Frontals

Sir, Mr Arthur Marshall is persona gratissima in this family (he doesn't know) and yet we must take issue with him. Mr Marshall (NS 12 May) remembers Siegfried's vast German bottom wobbling beneath healing waters into which he, Siegfried, has dipped, being utterly spent. This is intriguing. Siegfried does not bathe in ordinary water, healing or otherwise, but in the blood of the dragon he has just slain

(without, of course being spent in the slightest). Dragon's blood is definitely non-see-through – so the question arises: what did young Mr Marshall see? Or rather, how come he missed what must have been the first full frontal on film? Because that was what the makers of *Der Ring des Nibelungen*, unaware no doubt of blazing a trail, did treat the audience to. (No one was in any way upset by it).

Since the time will no doubt come when serious research is devoted to the breakthrough of full frontals etc, the whole complex problem seems of paramount interest. Could it be that the British censor slyly replaced an innocent German frontal by a (vast?) British bottom? And if so, would that have been wise?

H. WENSKUS

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West Germany

Apolitical

Sir, As I understand it the new radio wavelengths in November mean that if you wish to avoid broadcasts from the House of Commons you must have V.H.F. Most of my listening is done while driving where V.H.F. is not a success. So I appear to be lumbered which is unfair. After all if I want sheep I can look out of the car window. Move the politicians to V.H.F. and there will soon be a Very High Frequency of switch offs.

H. F. POWELL

9 Caisters Close
Hove
Sussex

Raymond Postgate

Sir, I am engaged in writing a biographical memoir of my father-in-law, the late Raymond Postgate, and I should be extremely grateful for any help, in the way of letters or reminiscences, that readers of the NEW STATESMAN could give me, in particular material relating to the period before the Second World War. Documents would be treated with great care, photocopied and returned.

MRS JOHN POSTGATE

Houndean Lodge
1 Houndean Rise
Lewes
East Sussex

STUDENTS

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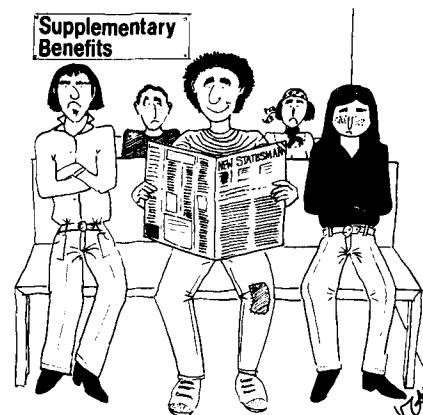
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First Person

Arthur Marshall

So Nice to be Merry

For reasons that are truly incomprehensible to an aged journalistic nobody, I have in the past few years been interviewed on ten occasions. I can only assume that the kind and polite people concerned had 'done' everybody of interest and importance and were now down to the riff-raff at the bottom of the barrel. Faced with printing space or wave-bands to fill, they had become desperate. Five of the interviews were on telly, one on radio and four on paper and on behalf of journals. During all of them I tried not to look as totally nonplussed as I felt. I answered various questions and, when the venue was 'Myrtlebank', dispensed sherry and posed for snaps. I suspect that I was a bit of a disappointment as all but two of the interviewers, both of whom knew better, touched at some point on what they hopefully referred to as my 'serious side', trustfully imagining hidden depths of character and thought where no hidden depths exist.

And so I continue on my frivolous way and if I make so bold as to say that my first topic here is the late Queen Mary it is because she, among many virtues, knew on occasion how to abandon seriousness. When it wasn't too intellectually taxing, she enjoyed the theatre (she and George V went three times to *Rose Marie*) and was much taken, and how understandably, by a warm, witty and satirical revue staged post-war, and a stone's throw from the Brompton Road, at the little Boltons Theatre, then under the skilful management of John Wyse. How she ever came to hear of this treat, who can say, but there she was (again on three occasions) thumping out the rhythm of the livelier tunes with her parasol. Prior to her first visit, a tactful message had come from her lady-in-waiting to say that none of the fairly saucy material need be changed, which enabled gifted Billy Milton to sing a number called 'I'm the only Fakir on the Pier' (it went on, if memory serves, with 'And I'm feeling decidedly queer'). As she left, she bowed happily to all and sundry and kept saying 'Wasn't it good!' It was indeed.

I next saw her on what was for her a duty occasion but one that was only very slightly less light-hearted – the evening of ballet that re-opened Covent Garden the year after the war. She was with the king, the queen and the princesses, a splendidly regal figure (no parasol or tumpety-tum this time) advantageously placed in the royal box at what was visually the best end, the one furthest from the stage. During the second interval I noticed that Queen Mary, evidently keen to discover who was occupying the box next to her, had eased herself and her bust forward and was clearly bent on peering round the pillar for a look at her neighbours. At the same moment, I

saw, to my great delight, that a jewel-encrusted occupant (one must assume a Duchess) had herself decided to see how things were going in the royal box and had similarly eased herself gently into position. They chose, as I hoped, the very same moment for peering round the barrier and found themselves dramatically nose to nose and, in the modern phrase, eyeball to eyeball. I have seldom seen two such startled ladies. Both heads shot rapidly back and thereafter kept themselves to themselves.

A hundred years before this event, the royal box at Covent Garden was frequently filled. Hitherto, one has somehow associated Queen Victoria's theatre-going solely with solemn command performances at Windsor or Osborne, with the widow in deepest mourning and creating pools of gloom from the front row. Nothing could be further from the truth and it is a happy astonishment to discover, from George Rowell's very charming *Queen Victoria Goes to the Theatre* (Elek, £6.95), what a keen student of the drama she was, and keen also on almost any other entertainment that was going, the visits all being excitedly recorded in her Journal. She particularly enjoyed circuses and was delighted to discover that the Drury Lane pantomime of 1838 included a turn by Van Amburgh's lions. Despite 'an awful squint of the eyes', Van Amburgh grappled with the animals, threw them to the ground while they angrily

roared, and then lay on them: 'It's quite beautiful to see and makes me wish I could do the same' was the wistful and mind-boggling royal comment. As was to be her way, she returned repeatedly (seven times in six weeks) to the lions. The Drury Lane management, no fools, retained Van Amburgh when the pantomime was over and he incongruously popped up again at the end of Rossini's *William Tell*, through which Her Majesty had impatiently sat in order to get once more at those lions ('worth more than all the rest'). The unbridled love of entertainment was to continue, with a bit of a hiccup on Albert's death, all her life. The grumpy, sulky and legendarily unamused lady vanishes, to be replaced by the great enjoyer and laughter that she undoubtedly was. 'We were all in fits of laughter' is a regular Journal entry. 'How you have made me laugh!' she said to Mrs Bancroft after a performance at Balmoral. 'It is so nice to be merry.'

Her theatrical and operatic tastes were entirely catholic. Anything was worth trying once. She went to *Henry V*, *Lucia di Lammermoor*, *Figaro* and *O'Flanagan and the Fairies*, whatever that may have been. Farce (*His Last Legs*) was perfectly acceptable. The frequency of her visits is quite staggering. By 1852 she had been to Her Majesty's Theatre, only one of many London theatres, over 350 times. She went to first nights, considerably adding to the backstage agitations. She took, reprehensibly in my view, to 'dropping in' for an act of this or a scene of that. Like Queen Mary, no theatre was too remote for her (the tiny Olympic in Wych Street was constantly honoured). She conceived a strange fancy for the versatile Frederick Robson who, as well as act, could also dance and sing ('His song, terminating with the refrain "Diddle doo, diddle dum" quite haunts us'). And from one play she garnered a useful little phrase which she passed on to her eldest daughter in a letter: 'Now goodbye, my dearest, and as Papa says (the policeman says it in *Still Waters Run Deep*), "Keep up your pecker", meaning "keep up your spirits".'

It will not be supposed that when she went to a theatre, she left her critical faculties outside, but by and large everything was lovely and when Jenny Lind first came over, Victoria and Albert attended every one of her performances. And how convenient it was for entertaining visitors. Napoleon III and his Empress, arriving for a State visit (the Waterloo Chamber at Windsor was hurriedly rechristened the Portrait Gallery), were soon whizzed off to *Fidelio* ('Just as we were ready to go, the Emperor upset his cup of coffee over his cocked hat, which caused great amusement').

With the death of Albert, when his widow so signally failed to keep her pecker up, Victoria's theatre-going was over. Instead, the theatre came frequently to her, wherever she might be and at whatever inconvenience to the players. And there had always been ceaseless family amateur theatricals, with the future Edward VII doing good work in a German version of *Red Riding Hood*. 'Bertie did his part of the Wolf particularly well,' wrote his proud mother of this very early example of type-casting.

Roger Woddiss

No Connection

Police say they have no reason to connect the East End race riot with the National Front.

Where is the evidence? we cry.
Confessions? – have they signed them?
A crowd of youngsters on the loose
Just happened to be passing by;
What solid proof can you adduce
They had the Front behind them?

A rampage, yes: a race-war, no.
Yes, madam, it's perfectly horrid;
We take your point, but wonder if
Your grounds are sound and apropos.
Can you produce an Asian stiff
With 'NF' carved on his forehead?

We see the bruises, but they're not
Political contusions.
We in the Force are trained and bred
To see what's up and know what's what;
Just because Alf jumped on Abdul's head,
We shouldn't jump to conclusions.

BOOKS IN GENERAL

David Caute

The Incurable Liberal

Herod: Reflections on Political Violence by CONOR CRUISE O'BRIEN *Hutchinson* £6.50

Herod comprises 14 essays and three didactic dramas. These plays in particular display the gifts for which Conor Cruise O'Brien is notorious: wit, clarity, economy of language and dialectical audacity. As with Shaw, the light, easy style is at the service of a moral concern; O'Brien's coruscating demolitions of political hypocrisy and tribal romanticism evoke laughter, but it is an uneasy laughter. It is a pity that these plays have not been more widely performed.

O'Brien's ability to move, deftly but relevantly, from one literary form to another, like his varied careers as 'man of action' – UN representative in the Congo at the time of Katanga's attempted secession, Vice-Chancellor of the University of Ghana in the Nkrumah era, Schweitzer Professor at New York University, member of the Dail, Minister for Posts and Telecommunications, Senator, Editor-in-Chief of the *Observer* – conveys the extraordinary range of his talents. Such talents inevitably foster distrust and resentment in certain quarters; he has made, in his time, one or two enemies; nor could it be argued that conflict is entirely alien to his nature.

In the late 1960s O'Brien was based – a just word: he is peripatetic – in New York. It was a time of high historical temperature and passionate contention. An often bitter debate had split the ranks of the intellectuals: the issue was not so much communism as the alternative postures of anti-communism and anti-anti-communism. It was more a debate about priorities than fundamentals, more about lesser evils than panaceas. At that time the thrust of O'Brien's thought was directed against official violence and institutionalised violence as practised by the West in Africa and the United States in Vietnam. The revelations, then breaking, about the CIA's funding of the Congress for Cultural Freedom and its satellite periodicals wrought havoc in the ranks of the cold-war liberals. I recall that in the Schweitzer Department at New York University there was a mood of mounting jubilation, as if our candidate was winning one primary after another.

I found myself in almost entire agreement with the content and style of his political thought; I still am. The question, rather, is whether he still is. At that time he took issue with the Adlai Stevenson type of liberalism, which he described as 'the elevation into universal values of the codes which favoured the emergence, and favour the continuance, of capitalist society'. Even so, and despite his attachment to socialism, he found in himself an 'incurable' core of liberalism: the following passage, written 13 years ago, after he left Nkrumah's Ghana much disenchanted, acquires a new relevance in the light of the essays now published in *Herod*:

Whatever I might argue, I was more profoundly attached to liberal concepts of freedom . . . than I was to the idea of any disciplined party mobilising all the forces of society for the creation of a social order guaranteeing more real freedom for all instead of just for a few. The revolutionary idea . . . struck me as more *immediately* relevant for most of humanity than were the liberal concepts. But it was the liberal concepts . . . that held my allegiance.

Reading *Herod*, I was prompted to reread O'Brien's comments on Camus's famous quarrel with Sartre: if, as I recalled, he had come down on Sartre's side, did his recent emphasis on the evils and illegitimacy of political violence not represent a tacit reversal of his previous position? On re-examination, one discovers that O'Brien was able to support Sartre's position only by adopting a silent neutrality towards its more radical propositions. Just as Sartre had contended that an intellectual's first duty is to put his own house in order before denouncing Soviet concentration camps, so O'Brien had reasoned that obsessive anti-communism had been used to justify the horrors of America's intervention in Vietnam and to blunt American intellectuals' perception of capitalist imperialism. But Sartre was simultaneously pursuing a more radical argument, the legitimisation of revolutionary violence as indispensable to the liberation of the Western proletariat and the colonised peasants of the Third World.

In retrospect it does not surprise me that O'Brien declined to travel with Sartre all the way. It was not merely that the Hegelian-marxist-existentialist apparatus employed by Sartre has never been O'Brien's; he no doubt also experienced the acute dilemma shared by many Western socialists torn between values precious to themselves and values relevant to peoples for whom hunger and subjugation are the norm of daily life. But his most recent writings on Africa (not included in this volume) convince me that he would now reject the whole Sartrean proposition unequivocally.

The essays collected in *Herod* are mostly the children of Conor Cruise O'Brien's intense commitment to the restoration of peace and sanity in Ireland – a crusade that he has pursued with exemplary moral and physical courage. The central proposition linking the essays is that if political violence is to be legitimised, it must be on rational grounds, in relation to particular circumstances, and not 'by play on the emotions, by obliquity, by scientism, by appeal to tribal self-applause and atavistic resentments . . .' He is quick to acknowledge that the inequalities still prevailing in democratic society 'are in the last resort defended by violence', and that it is tempting to dismiss as hypocritical any condemnation of dissident violence which does not simultaneously challenge institutionalised violence. Yet, he insists, there is a crucial difference: a democratic government is

elected by and is responsible to its constituents.

Abuses of power by the state, and particularly by its quasi-autonomous, non-elected agencies, are common: O'Brien counsels those liberals who direct all their fire in this direction to imagine the texture of life in those parts of Northern Ireland where the only law prevailing is the whim of armed terrorists or vigilantes. Middle-class intellectuals, beset by guilt, may project their masochism at a safe distance by romanticising the activities of 'guerrillas' in faraway lands. The sight of 'your neighbours' legs, arms and heads being collected in plastic containers outside the bombed-out shell of your local supermarket' evokes rather different sentiments. Furthermore, the official statements put out by terrorist groups to explain their aims are either vague to the point of meaninglessness or bear, in all probability, no relation at all to the way these people would behave if they came to power.

This is all perfectly true. Two questions are raised: (a) what is the proper response to terrorism? (b) in what circumstances can political violence be regarded as legitimate? Since the roots of terrorism in the West rarely have rational foundations, O'Brien argues, there is no point in attempting to cure the disease by the preventive medicine of social and political reform – however necessary it may be to pursue such reforms for their own sake.

What happened was that Derry Corporation, the old Stormont itself, and the institutions of caste supremacy generally, all disappeared, and people went on killing children and others, and legitimising the killing of children and others. In the Republic . . . people sincerely deplored the violence in the North, and also persisted in using language that legitimised that violence.

This point is of cardinal importance to O'Brien. Not only must the state meet force with that moderated degree of force which remains the lesser evil, it may also feel obliged to embark on limited censorship by denying to the gunmen the publicity they crave. Publicity has brought the IRA funds from North America, new recruits and a helpful atmosphere of fear. Freedom of expression would be an absolute value, he argues, if all discourse consisted of rational argument; but in practice words can be used to 'whip up feelings conducive to pogroms'.

We come, now, to a controversial episode in a controversial career. As Minister for Posts and Telecommunications, O'Brien introduced legislation and signed an order prohibiting the Irish Broadcasting Authority from interviewing spokesmen of Provisional IRA and Provisional Sinn Féin. 'The broadcaster's professional instinct inclines him towards exposure of what is exciting, even sensational' without regard to the social consequences: less a matter of bias than 'a kind of neutral professionalism'; hence the need for government intervention. Roy Mason, I believe, has forcefully expressed similar sentiments – even though he must now examine seriously allegations of police malpractice based, originally, on a BBC investigation.

This is one dilemma: when is IRA propaganda IRA propaganda? (As Joe McCarthy used to say, 'You may not call yourself a Commie, but I know you're a Commie because you have brought allegations against this Committee which is in business to expose Commies.') I am not persuaded that it is the job of a public broadcasting authority, how-

ever accountable to the public/state in the long term, to interpret the public interest in the short term precisely as the government does – even on questions of life and death. Effective executive action will always conflict with the public's right to be informed: the maintenance of this tension is essential to democracy.

As for the irrationality of the culture which propagates IRA terrorism, I agree with O'Brien entirely: the trouble is, as he points out, that this irrationality has for years been nurtured by one of Ireland's major parties, Fianna Fáil. If this 'common culture' has, as he says, sustained the morale, the sense of historical justification, of the IRA, one is bound to conclude that O'Brien's ministerial intervention in 1975 was aimed at saving quite a large proportion of his fellow-countrymen from their own bad habits of thought (or non-thought). No doubt the British Race Relations Acts have had the same aim. It is of course an unresolvable conundrum of political theory to distinguish between, or separate, words (free) and actions (punishable).

Finally, in what circumstances can political violence be justified? Never, according to O'Brien, where genuinely democratic outlets exist. Beyond that, these essays do not systematically confront the question. But his next collection may well do so, judging by his most recent articles on Southern Africa. He has already indicated that, were genuinely free elections to be held in Rhodesia on the basis of the Salisbury Agreement, and were a black government based on a black parliament to come to office, and were the Patriotic Front nevertheless to continue its war, then he would judge the PF's behaviour as morally equivalent to that of the IRA, Baader-Meinhof and the Red Brigades. There are several answers to this, but here is not the place for them, the main point being that although the conceptual and moral framework of Conor Cruise O'Brien's thought has remained remarkably consistent, there has been a marked shift in its balance, its priorities – and priorities are what political thought is all about.

Antony Polonsky

The End of the Word

Soviet Book Publishing Policy by GREGORY WALKER *Cambridge* £6.95

Solzhenitsyn and the Secret Circle by OLGA CARLISLE *Routledge & Kegan Paul* £4.95

Kontinent 2: The Alternative Voice of Russia and Eastern Europe *Coronet* £1.25

It is one of the proud boasts of the Soviet Union that it produces more books than almost any other country in the world and makes them readily available to the public at reasonable prices. In 1975, for instance, 83,000 books and pamphlets were published in nearly 1.2 thousand million copies. The greatest demand was for works of fiction (including poetry), encyclopedias and dictionaries, books on hobbies and matters connected with the home, and scholarly works published in small editions. Political propaganda for a mass audience has proved less popular, but has also been produced on a vast scale. In spite of the generally low price of books (school textbooks are sold especially cheaply), the publishing industry has become increasingly able to pay its own way. Government policy has in fact been to reduce the subsidies to publishers (9 million roubles in 1971) as far as possible without making necessary significant increases in price. At the same time, resources have been shifted from subjects like politics, where it has sometimes been difficult to sell all the books published, to more popular fields, such as fiction.

In many ways, this is an admirable record of success and in *Soviet Book Publishing Policy* Gregory Walker is concerned to describe how it has been achieved. He concedes that Soviet publishing is subject to strong ideological pressure, that the decisions on what can or cannot be published are usually taken at the highest level and that economic considerations are often subordinated to the political goals of the Communist Party. Yet he argues that these factors should not be 'overstressed or

taken in isolation'. Many of the characteristic features of the Soviet publishing scene are the result of its size (the industry employs 300,000 people) and centralised character. Although the Central Committee's Department of Propaganda and the State Committee for Publishing do decide how resources are to be allocated between the different areas of publishing, direct intervention in the publishing process by the highest authorities is relatively infrequent. Thus, he argues, 'the majority of titles issued by most Soviet publishing houses result from the exercise of [their own] . . . discretion and not from the assignment to them of works which they are instructed to publish'. Yet Walker's emphasis on the technical aspects of Soviet publishing – the reader will find in his book much information on how Soviet writers are paid, how books are distributed and how publishers deal with printers – tends to be misleading. The fact is that political control of publishing is overwhelming in the USSR, as Walker does on occasion admit. Before a work is published it has to be vetted by the author himself, by the editorial staff of the publishing house, often by external referees and the Writers Union, and nearly always by both the State Committee for Publishing and the censor. As literary and political guidelines have become increasingly rigid since the trial of Siniavsky and Daniel in 1965, any expression of non-conformist views has become increasingly difficult.

One of those who fell foul of the censorship was, inevitably, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, determined as he was to expose the truth about the vast concentration-camp system which had been established by Stalin. Khrushchev had authorised the publication of *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* in 1962 as a means of discrediting his opponents, but after his fall his successors were determined to allow no further compromising revelations about the camps. Even *Cancer Ward*, where

criticism of the Soviet regime was extremely muted in character, could not be published. As a result, Solzhenitsyn came to the reluctant conclusion that he would have to allow his books to appear in the West. This was a risky decision, since in 1965 Siniavsky and Daniel received long terms of imprisonment in a labour camp for publishing 'anti-Soviet' literature outside the USSR, and it required collaborators of courage and discretion. In *Solzhenitsyn and the Secret Circle*, one of these collaborators, Olga Carlisle, describes her part in the operation.

At the start, all seemed to go well. Solzhenitsyn was put in touch with Mrs Carlisle by the writer Kornei Chukovsky who had provided him with a much-needed haven when he was at odds with the Soviet government. Mrs Carlisle who had been brought up in the Russian émigré community of Paris and was the granddaughter of the writer Andreev, was immediately captivated by the moral authority of Solzhenitsyn, a man who saw himself as 'another government' in the Soviet Union and who was convinced, perhaps rightly, that his works would 'stun public opinion throughout the world'. She arranged for the translation of *The First Circle* and its publication in the US, where it was a great success. Relations began to sour over the publication of *The Gulag Archipelago*. After some argument, Solzhenitsyn, in an angry letter of April 1973, withdrew Mrs Carlisle's right to sell it on a world-wide basis. He accused her of trying to 'put a stop on the movement of this book, which is not a literary commodity, but a link in Russian history'; this provoked Mrs Carlisle to reply that if her father were alive, he would challenge Solzhenitsyn to a duel.

In *The Oak and the Calf*, Solzhenitsyn went still further, blaming Mrs Carlisle and her associates, whom he described as 'two or three dry mercenary people of Western education', for his expulsion from the USSR which, he claimed, could have been prevented if *Gulag Archipelago* had been published earlier.

It is difficult to pronounce on the rights and wrongs of this controversy, except to point out Solzhenitsyn's extreme suspiciousness and the great difficulties in communication experienced by the author and his associates in the West. In addition, one is struck by the wide gap of understanding which, in spite of their common Russian background, existed between Solzhenitsyn and Mrs Carlisle as a result of his experience in the USSR and her growing up in the West. Mrs Carlisle is determined to be fair to the great writer and her book is not written in any spirit of rancour. She gave up a great deal as a result of her association with Solzhenitsyn: it became impossible for her to play her chosen role of intermediary between Russian cultural life and the West. How much has been lost is clear from the vivid sketches of various Russian literary figures, above all Chukovsky himself, which are featured in this book. Her final conclusion is balanced and perceptive. Solzhenitsyn, she argues, is 'a character like Peer Gynt or Faust, a man who climbs so far above ordinary human experience with its defeats, its comforts and gratifications that he is committed to the company of alien and perhaps inhospitable gods'. Such a man could never co-exist easily with ordinary mortals.

Solzhenitsyn's relationship with Mrs Carlisle, like his relationship with Western liberals generally, is replete with irony. On the first

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occasion they met, Solzhenitsyn, knowing that Mrs Carlisle was the grand-daughter of the Social Revolutionary Viktor Chernov, bitterly attacked the Provisional Government of which he had been a part for its ineptitude in allowing Lenin to go into hiding in Finland. One of the experiences which Mrs Carlisle describes most movingly is her participation in the great anti-Vietnam War march on Washington in 1968. She reflected at the time that in its anti-authoritarian and democratic character it embodied the essence of the works of Solzhenitsyn which she was trying to bring before the Western world. Yet as she was later to discover, Solzhenitsyn was a firm advocate of the American involvement in Vietnam and regarded its opponents as deluded fools. After moving to San Francisco, she met Daniel Ellsberg, who had been attacked by Solzhenitsyn as a traitor to his government. Ellsberg was deeply hurt by this and confided to Mrs Carlisle that *The First Circle* had been one of the books which had sustained him when he had to make the difficult decision to publish the *Pentagon Papers*.

Since the trial of Siniavsky and Daniel and the outrage which it provoked in the West, the Soviet authorities have adopted the practice of

expelling rather than imprisoning dissident writers, and a substantial number of Soviet literary figures now find themselves in the West. It was in order to provide an outlet for their works that the Russian language quarterly *Kontinent* was established under the editorship of Vladimir Maximov. It opened its pages not only to people recently expelled from the Soviet Union but also to the older group of émigrés, to East Europeans in the West and even to some Western writers, such as Ignazio Silone. A selection from the first issues of *Kontinent* was published in English in 1976. *Kontinent* 2 contains a similar English selection from issues 2 to 5. There are altogether 12 contributions and they range from history and literary criticism to a cycle of sonnets by the Czech poet Jaroslav Seifert and a short story by Alexander Sukonik. All are interesting and provocative, in particular Vladimir Voinovich's dry retelling of an encounter with the KGB, Alexander Bachrach's description of his relations with the symbolist poet Alexander Bely in Berlin and Leszek Kolakowski's characteristically trenchant account of the sources of Marx's social philosophy. One only hopes that it will soon be possible for them to appear in the USSR.

Richard Ellmann

The Subverted Flower

Robert Frost: The Work of Knowing by
RICHARD POIRIER *Oxford* £5.95

Robert Frost sought and kept a larger popular audience than the other distinguished American poets of his time – Stevens, Eliot, Pound, and Williams, who came to fame after him. He was a poet who could be safely entrusted even to children, being neither difficult nor embarrassingly passionate. Instead of contenting him, this popularity became a burden. Some of the high-powered critics of the day dismissed him as 'a mere easy-going versifier' (Blackmur's phrase). The qualities that they admired, such as the oracular utterance of Yeats and Eliot, the daring flights of Stevens, the pungency amid randomness of Williams, were not his. Yet he did not accept that he was without claim: 'I should like to be so subtle at this game as to seem to a casual person altogether obvious.'

With time his subtlety has come to be allowed, though not everyone relishes it. An attempt has been made to incorporate Frost in the modern tradition. Lionel Trilling among others discovered in him a Lawrentian darkness. Richard Poirier, while also reclaiming Frost for modernism, rightly insists that Trilling praises Frost for the wrong reasons. Although Frost does face up to terror, his recuperative powers are considerable, and regularly bring him back from the depths to surfaces where things are once more negotiable. In this sense his poetry offers reassurance, Mr Poirier says, and even his language, a homebound vernacular, is itself a reproof to sublime flights and terrific drops: 'His ultimate subject is the interpreting process itself', and it is here that Mr Poirier locates his true modernity.

Lawrance Thompson's biography registered a good deal of distaste as well as admiration for Frost. Thompson's man is consumed by guilt and racked, quite properly, by remorse. Mr Poirier finds these qualities very much to Frost's credit. His Frost has the intrepidity to consider himself responsible for everything that happens to him. At the same time, there is more to him than the suffering misdoer. There is, for example, the artist who carves out a place for himself in the literary tradition after Emerson and William James.

The brooding quality of Frost's poems often limits their statements, since, as he said, he wanted to utter 'things that suggest formulae but won't formulate – that almost but don't quite formulate'. Mr Poirier, rather than explicate, 'monitors what is going on in the dialectical plays of sounds and metaphors'. This method, brilliantly applied, leads him to consider not only the ostensible but the latent subject of each poem. In his own version of structuralism, he finds the latent subject to be the poem's awareness of itself as a 'made' or performed object. This self-reflexiveness is what especially interests Mr Poirier, though it must be said that he does not let go of the ostensible subject. His excellent analysis of 'The Silken Tent', for instance, concedes its status as a love poem, but insists that from the first line ('She is as in a field a silken tent') the poet's placement and display of the tent for the beloved shifts the emphasis from her being to the poem's being.

Mr Poirier derives a good deal of his own admirable energy in this book from the effort to perceive this reflexive quality in Frost, often in poems where it is not at first apparent. He makes excellent use of the sparse declarations in prose that Frost has offered about

his work, and uses as a starting-point the gnomic utterance, 'So many of them have literary criticism in them – in them. And yet I wouldn't admit it. I try to hide it.' The result is a series of magnificent readings, sometimes applied to familiar and sometimes to unfamiliar poems. 'Mending Wall' is as much about Frost's poetical enterprise, which often works by undermining and then mending, as about fields and fences. Frost can never be read naïvely again; Mr Poirier's book takes its place beside R. A. Brower's *The Poetry of Robert Frost* and engages more difficulties than Brower does.

What makes his treatment especially engaging is his willingness to allow that Frost had defects, more noticeable later than earlier, but present throughout. The method of ironic simplicity, which if challenged for being ironic falls back upon simplicity, and if challenged for simplicity falls back upon irony, can dispirit (Edward Thomas, who closely followed many of Frost's qualities, avoided this one). Backspin is a good thing, but only if there is forward movement. Mr Poirier recognises that at some point statements must be made, but he admires the way Frost allows doubt to mix in right up to the end, as if he rigorously refused to believe either too much or too little. Frost can withhold total assent while still affirming: 'For once, then, something.'

This book exhibits Mr Poirier's by now well-established gift for critical search and discovery, and lucid exposition. If it is controversial, that is part of his aim. Not every interpretation is persuasive. For example, 'The Subverted Flower' is a poem in which Mr Poirier rightly finds the subject to be the woman's sexual terror of her lover. This transforms him into a beast in her eyes, and transforms her, all unwittingly, into one too. The poem begins with her outrage at something the young man has done, and Mr Poirier needlessly assumes that this something is an act of indecent exposure. The young man's sexual desire may easily have been made explicit without such fanfare. Frost referred to the poem as a treatment of 'frigidity in women', meaning his wife, and Mr Poirier is content this time, as rarely elsewhere, to leave it as primarily autobiographical. One waits in vain for him to acknowledge the poem's weakness, which is that it presents frigidity with such reprehension and lack of sympathy, and is totally self-justifying for the poet. It lends grim support to Frost's assertion that what he depended upon in his art was 'mostly animus', not inspiration.

While Mr Poirier has much to say about other aspects of Frost, his insistence on the self-reflexive one sometimes seems to turn Frost's world into a gigantic hothouse in which fields and woods and people are suffered to have only a provisional character as components of a performance or parable. We are only occasionally allowed to taste the honeysuckle and burning clove which Frost held in 'To Earthward' as the ingredients of actual experience. It is often a relief to read, beside some ironical crisscross of Frost, the same or a similar idea as expressed by Emerson or William James, which this book astutely collocates. These writers are allowed by Mr Poirier to mean what they say, without self-cancelling equivocations or self-reflexive dynamics. While Mr Poirier has written this book for Frost's glory, his analytical skill often exposes vulnerabilities as well as felicities in the poetry.

Paul Addison

Brick in Hand

Police Strike – 1919 by A. V. SELLWOOD W. H. Allen £5.95

A History of Police in England and Wales by T. A. CRITCHLEY *Constable* £5.50

In the days of Sherlock Holmes the policeman was one of the most downtrodden of working men. Apart from occasional rest days, he worked a 10 or 12-hour day seven days a week, and received the wage of the unskilled labouring class from which he was drawn. The para-military system of discipline left the junior ranks of the force with no protection against arbitrary fines or dismissal. Many found the going too rough and resigned after a year or two, but there were always others to take their place: it was better to patrol the slums than inhabit them, and there was much to be said for a warm uniform and a recognised position of authority. The policeman could easily be seen as a species of working-class turncoat, for if he called at the pub it was usually to charge some of the customers with disorderly behaviour, and if he appeared at the dock or the factory gate it was invariably to protect blackleg labour and wield his truncheon against the pickets. Yet the police were as keen as other workers to establish basic rights for themselves. At the end of the first world war they flabbergasted the government by going on strike with the encouragement of the Labour Party and the TUC.

In 1912 a National Union of Police and Prison Officers was founded by John Syme, an ex-inspector who had fallen out with his superior officers and embarked on a life-long vendetta against Scotland Yard and the Home Office. Syme was an unbalanced character who was often to be seen in later years approaching 10 Downing Street with a stern expression and a brick in hand. The Union, too, was an eccentric affair to begin with. Since any policeman found to belong to it was liable to instant dismissal, organisation was carried on in secret and the only list of members was kept by a mysterious shopkeeper in Horseferry Road. But the first world war turned the Union into a success. While industrial wages and the cost of living shot up, the government took the police for granted and held down their pay. Recruits flooded in and by 1918 the Union was a powerful body, affiliated to the Labour Party and the TUC, and led by organisers who mixed freely with dockers' and railwaymen's leaders. At the end of August 1918 the Union called out the Metropolitan Police on strike. Contrary to the worst fears, there was no sign either of a crime wave or of revolutionary disturbance during the 48 hours in which London went unprotected, but the Cabinet were not anxious to try the experiment for longer. Lloyd George himself agreed to meet the strike leaders, and with a wonderful display of sympathy and moonshine appeared to concede both their key demands: higher pay and union recognition. In fact the government were perfectly content to concede higher pay, but deeply alarmed by the spectre of police trade unionism. How could a government maintain order during a

General Strike, or any other kind of protest by the world of labour, if the TUC could rely upon the support of the police? The Union had to be broken.

The breaking of the Union proved to be a very neat and lasting job. Sir Neville Macready, a bluff soldier with a ruthless twinkle in his eye, was given *carte blanche* as the new Commissioner of Metropolitan Police. He proposed both a generous pay settlement, and new machinery for the safe handling of grievances in the shape of the Police Federation; finally, all policemen who belonged to the Union were to be dismissed. The leaders of the Union in desperation called a national police strike for August Bank Holiday 1919, but this time 97 per cent of all policemen reported for duty as usual. Only on Merseyside did law and order spectacularly break down: the police stood by as the population of the slum area erupted into revolt and looted shops and warehouses. The government sent in tanks, a battleship arrived in the Mersey, and the streets were at last cleared by soldiers with bayonets. Macready's victory was total and thorough. Every policeman who took part in the strike was dismissed and none was ever reinstated or allowed to recover his pension rights. For years the ex-strikers campaigned for redress of their grievances, expecting above all that a Labour government would help them, for a number of sentimental windbags in the Labour movement had urged them on with promises of solidarity in 1919. In 1945 a delegation of veterans went hopefully to Downing Street, where Mr Attlee quickly disillusioned them in his best chilly manner.

The second of the two great police strikes is A. V. Sellwood's subject in an account which focuses on the disorders in Liverpool and Birkenhead. I am tempted to make a citizen's arrest of Mr Sellwood on a charge of producing an unnecessary book, for a full and excellent history of both strikes was written by G. W. Reynolds and Anthony Judge in 1968. But with the help of eye witnesses Sellwood does recreate from the inside the very crude and brutish atmosphere in which the Merseyside police worked, locked in a running battle with a racially mixed population always on the brink of insurgency. The impression is somehow reinforced by Sellwood's vividly ungrammatical English.

All told there are very few good books on the police. Along with soldiers, sailors and shopkeepers they attract little sympathy or attention from social historians, most of whom like to write either about civilised middle-class life, or about the struggles of industrial workers in the class war. So far, the best overall history of the police, tracing them from their forerunners the parish constables, through the era of the Peelers with their blue tailed coats and top hats, and so at last to Dixon and Sir Robert Mark, is the account by T. A. Critchley published in 1967 and now brought up to date. His is very much a view from above, the police seen from the Home Office as pillars of society. A significant book could be written on the view from below, where a policeman was likely to be regarded with the sort of fear and suspicion indicated in Robert Roberts's *The Classic Slum*. It would be even more interesting to trace the emergence of the police as a genuinely popular and admired institution among the respectable population at large. Everyone knows why police forces evoke hostility. But why were our policemen wonderful?

Hilary Spurling

Saddest Story

Moon in Eclipse: A Life of Mary Shelley by JANE DUNN *Weidenfeld* £8.50

There can be few more poignant lines in the whole history of literature than Mary Shelley's instinctive cry, on being told that her only surviving son Percy ought to learn to think for himself: 'O God, teach him to think like other people.' The remark is not quoted in Jane Dunn's biography; for all I know it is apocryphal; certainly it has done Mary herself more harm than good with posterity. As the offspring of Mary Wollstonecraft and William Godwin, the chosen sister of Percy Shelley's soul, she was freely criticised in her lifetime, as she has been ever since, for failure to come up to scratch. It was a view she herself was temperamentally inclined to share. Indeed she seems to have been as taken aback as anyone else when she was finally obliged to accept that she had no desire whatever to reform the world: 'I am not a person of opinions,' she wrote defensively after Shelley's death in a passage which makes no bones about her contempt for the envious claptrap and mindless violence of contemporary Radicals.

But radical goals had been from earliest infancy the only ones she recognised. Brought

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up in a comfortless household by an uncongenial stepmother, she had idolised her august and inaccessible father almost as much as her dead mother, and found the stirring precepts instilled by both gloriously embodied in her love for Shelley (who was in turn overjoyed at the prospect of uniting himself, however irregularly, to two such illustrious in-laws). There is something recklessly unworldly about Mary's faith in idealists whose self-esteem was always infinitely more robust than hers. Emotional vulnerability put her in a different class from her husband or her parents, as she recognised long afterwards without bitterness and without cavilling at the frightful price she had paid by then for other people's principles. *Moon in Eclipse* is an attempt to assess that price, and how it changed Mary from the passionate and dazzlingly confident 16-year-old romantic who ran away with Shelley into the realist who, barely ten years later, longed only for a quiet life cut short by early death.

Godwin, whose marriage to her mother had made him the laughing-stock of progressive and radical London, was the first to turn against Mary for practising what he preached about free love. Throughout the next decade his letters, simultaneously washing his hands of Mary and demanding money with menaces from Shelley, were masterpieces of material rapacity and moral double-think. People said that Godwin had simply sold both girls (Mary's stepsister Claire Clairmont had gone along with her for good measure) to Shelley. Godwin countered by spreading it about that Shelley had not only ruined all three of his daughters, metaphorically or literally, but had actually seduced Mary on her sainted mother's grave. Later gossip had Shelley fathering Claire's child by Byron, and posthumous speculation has by no means stopped short at that (Richard Holmes, in his recent masterly biography, held that Shelley was in fact the father of a second, putative child by Claire while Mrs Dunn a trifle wildly gives that child, or rather another one born on the same day – the mysterious Elena Shelley who died in infancy like practically all Shelley's children – to Byron). There was a grain of truth in each of these rumours, as there was in Byron's cruel claim that the Shelleys killed off their children by starvation and green fruit.

All this is familiar enough but what chiefly concerns Mrs Dunn is the nightmarish effect on Mary as her visionary dream disintegrated in a seemingly endless round of death and desolation. 'This is the journal of Misfortune,' she wrote laconically in her diary after the death of her third child had been needlessly precipitated by Shelley, whose indifference to anybody's convenience save his own could on occasion outdo even Godwin's. The sanctimonious chill of his dealings with his first wife still makes one gasp; and so does the ruthless instinct for self-preservation which made him, like Godwin though a great deal more gracefully, withdraw support from Mary at the bleakest crises of her life.

And yet his death left her a burnt-out case. At 19 she had longed for the minutes to pass more slowly, at 24 – 'how drearily young for one so lost as I' – her active life was virtually over. Mrs Dunn devotes less than a quarter of her book to the remaining 29 years, which Mary spent in full retreat, mistreated or maltreated by Shelley's friends, hard up, cut off, shut away by the desperate isolation foretold in *Frankenstein* and further explored in *The Lost Man*, whose predicament mirrored

her own, 'girded, walled in, vaulted over, by seven-fold barriers of loneliness'. Mrs Dunn is good on points like Mary's premonitions (always sad and often fulfilled with uncanny precision), the slow wearing down of her resilience, the equally slow growth of fellow feeling for Harriet Shelley whose happiness she had once so blithely demolished and whose suicide came to seem a debt her successor was bound to pay in misery. The loss of Mary's children is examined in dispassionate detail, and so are the strands of pain, guilt, rejection and despair which in the end did not so much sever as reinforce her complex attachment to Shelley.

But Mrs Dunn's treatment of other, social, literary or political aspects of their life together is by comparison cursory and decidedly anachronistic. She accepts as a matter of course that her heroine took all the right lines on child psychology, one-parent families, sexual, political and religious freedom, rights for women – what Mary called for short 'the good cause': views so commonplace today that the reader is at times in danger of forgetting that the Shelleys were not in fact just another nice, ordinary, progressive couple such as one might meet for dinner any night in Islington or Hampstead. The result is an oddly lopsided perspective which undercuts both the revolutionary nature of such views at the turn of the 19th century, and the strains imposed on those who held them. Mary's husband after all was widely held by his contemporaries to be a lunatic if not a fiend; the right-wing press regularly dismissed her mother as a whore and her father as a pimp; she herself had her sanity called in question by the *Quarterly Review* which attributed *Frankenstein* to the school of Godwin 'whose disciples are a kind of out-pensioners of Bedlam . . .'

Small wonder if she prized above all else in dependable Percy his ability to keep in step. Her tireless efforts to persuade posterity of the exemplary virtues and heroic stature of more aggressive relatives have redounded severely to her own discredit; perhaps a biography which neglects the wider implications of her life in favour of redressing the domestic balance is no bad thing.

Zahir Jamal

The Rub

Getting Through by JOHN MCGAHERN *Faber* £4.25

The Public Burning by ROBERT COOVER *Allen Lane* £5.50

Carnival: Entertainments & Posthumous Tales by ISAK DINESEN *Heinemann* £4.95

Short stories, any headstone will attest, are about beginnings and ends. The chore is getting through the middle bit. McGahern adroitly copes by entrusting that chore to his characters, while retaining a mason's steady interest in beginnings and ends.

Getting Through is about killing time while time kills you. Not, as projects go, an especially pleasing scheme but then not, McGahern presumably would object, his scheme originally anyway. 'Accept your Maker's work: he

gave it me' was how Milton's Satan reasoned out his dread undertaking; and that line remains impregnable cover for a vocation to *timor mortis*. About the strength and depth of McGahern's calling these ten intimations of mortality leave no doubt.

'We assemble a love', a character reflects, 'as we assemble a life and grow so absorbed in the assembling that we wake in terror at the knowledge that all we have built is terminal, that in our pain we must undo it again.' The middle bit, a frustrated writer haunted by two images from both ends of Chekov's life discovers, is uninhabitable. And there, throughout, is the rub. McGahern's people would start anew, would re-marry, re-live 'dead days', retrieve lost hopes, regain past loves; but that middle bit defeats and decays. Afternoon is merely where day bends towards night, a time when a thwarted lyricism torments with prospects of 'all sorts of impossible things' that cannot help or pardon. Getting through, finally, is letting go ever less remorsefully as life lets go of you.

To suggest that an important truth has got itself mislaid in the formation of McGahern's vision seems pointless. Sermons boom hollowly inside the whale. What matters is the superb fiction he often manages with this lugubrious stuff. It's an old crux that provokes a familiar reply. Art, *pace* McGahern's failed writer, can help supply life's deficiencies precisely by insisting on them. To define the limits of living is merely to make lucid the bounds within which its vital dramas are enacted; and McGahern's stories do just that.

Flatness is his strength. He has an unfailing knack for keeping language dead level with its scene so that it seems hardly to notice the disturbance to its side. The style adapts most suggestively to those episodes which hint at a mortal humiliation obscured by an apparently minor upset: the aging ex-farmer – forgotten by his wife outside Tesco's – who, jerked from his daily nostalgic reverie, emerges oddly shaken and defenceless; the tired priest, struggling out of memories of a lost day, who feels ashamed as though caught out in despair.

Nor is sleep the only miniature death in the collection. Enough of Mother Church's primitive response to relics survives in her lapsed son to invest his minutest details with death's charge. Oysters, tickets, haircuts, socks, hats, overnight bags, fiddles and doorways phosphoresce unheeded in the afternoon light that greys upon these pages. Yet elegy is, finally, bereaved lyric; and the most moving of these stories remain those which, while acknowledging the cost of their pain, wish for no other. That spare dignity comes too infrequently, but is that then how it comes? *Getting Through* suggests so; in that and other ways it plainly invites comparison with the Joyce of *The Dead*. McGahern's black epiphanies, however, are something smaller and sharper. In the end – he'll forgive it being said – it's the little things that toll.

Little things told against the Rosenbergs back when *Fifties America* went sniffing for Reds. They were Jewish, they were small and they, well, smelled it. True, Einstein himself questioned the evidence of atomic theft which fried them, but with a name like Einstein what do you want? Robert Coover's animated satirical fantasy of America's political Dark Age fronts dim gargoyles to cover up doubtful architecture. Adopting a narrative shared between Richard M. Nixon and a surrealist omniscient isn't the likeliest of fictional ploys

but it works fitfully and, at times, quite aptly. Hysteria and hyperbole demand extreme angles of observation. A box in Nixon's brain-box seems drastically right for the occasion since it was there that much of the froth collected. What Coover is after, of course, is the inside story of Nixon's developing eye for the main chance. What he gets is banana purée. That, too, seems apt enough but, fiction-wise, it tends to clog the view.

A good view is what *The Public Burning* is mostly about. Coover's energetic ruse for re-creating the mood of McCarthyism is to haul the Eisenhower administration, Congress, the Supreme Court, an Entertainments Committee headed by De Mille, and the great American public into Times Square where the Rosenbergs are to get the chair. Not an unpromising scenario, incorporating as it does those twin lusts for righteousness and raz-zamataz that go like ketchup with all things American. But the build-up – some 500 pages of it – succumbs traitorously to the showmanship it set out to excoriate. Coover's itch to indict combines with an urge to display inwardness with the scene and results in unreadable stretches of *Who Was Who* at the fry-up.

Attempting to hide the boss's botch are the gargoyles. The omniscient himself evidently acquired his training in the graphics section of *Marvel Comics*. His portfolio includes Dozy Ike, slumbering mammothly through *High Noon*, his chief thrill apart from painting by numbers; Sticky Dicky, damply exciting himself with cavalier fantasies of Ethel Rosenberg; Vacuum Hoover, 'the world's most famous policeman', and assorted mutants and clones like Norman Vincent Peale and Billy Graham. With dummies like these to launch it, political satire can expect to nose down before take-off. And that, amid much grunting and snuffling, is what it does. Coover's towering Uncle Sam, though, threatens at points to be unforgettable. Rumoured to have once peed down Old Faithful, thereby creating the Hot Springs of Arkansas, he blasts his way through the book mouthing obscenities, kicking butts and generally giving everyone the shits. A fitting climax has him entering his new thrall, the trouserless Nixon, through the 'Snack Shack' at the back.

Karen Blixen, alias Osceola, Isak Dinesen and Pierre Andrése, published her first volume of stories in 1934. Literary opinion in her native Denmark, as elsewhere, sided with social realism. *Seven Gothic Tales* was her reply. The present inevitably uneven posthumous collection confirms that Dinesen never wavered in her defiance of the modern. Aristocratic in culture, tart in manner and cloudy in metaphysics, these tales affect by affronting. The incestuous fates of self-absorbed families in old European centres and the unsolicited appearances in Scandinavian parts of impertinent deities seem so dottily remote from anything imaginably claim-worthy that the attention is driven back to see what it missed. A rococo preciousness of construction inhibits narrative interest. Absolute egos animated by heroic forces beyond mortal ken rebuff sympathy and psychology. A blank disdain for all but the most accessible areas of the visible world defeats the mind's eye. And yet everywhere words engage, parts mesh, lines run and destinies ensue. Every inch a patrician ironist, Isak Dinesen claims for her art the highest end of all: exquisite uselessness, motion without matter.

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

Peter Conrad

Grand Designs

Die Zauberflöte Glyndebourne
Falstaff Covent Garden

Critical tradition reveres *Die Zauberflöte* as an allegory; theatrical tradition diminishes it to a pantomime. The opera has needed exegetical critics to rescue it from its apparent inanity. Goethe wrote a continuation in 1795, chastening the opera's random marvels and reformulating it as an allegory of regeneration. Shaw in 1890 converted it from the mumbo-jumbo of Freemasonry to the evolutionary rationalism of Comte, discerning in Sarastro the modern spirit of secular humanitarianism. G. Lowes Dickinson's fantasia in 1920 adjusted *Die Zauberflöte* to current spiritual disasters: the trial by fire is the trauma of war, the trial by water the welter of atheistic doubt. Auden, preparing a translation in 1956, separated the allegory from the extempore clowning of Schikaneder, rewriting the dialogue and disciplining the unruly Papageno.

These extrapolations all exist in defiance of the theatre, which has been content to accept *Die Zauberflöte* as amiable nonsense. Directors, despairing of solving the work's problems, have surrendered control to designers. Opera houses don't interpret *Die Zauberflöte*: they decorate it instead. Hence the succession of modern painters who have been engaged to atone for the treason of directors by dressing the work in a spurious stylistic unity. Kokoschka's vetoed designs for Covent Garden and Chagall's for the Metropolitan Opera deploy the pictorial manner as an instrument of evasion. *Die Zauberflöte* is lucid: musically and dramatically, it exemplifies the hard and wiry classical line of rectitude. Kokoschka and Chagall conveniently smudge this clarity and blur the work's ideological delineations into a luminous impressionistic haze, which disposes of interpretative problems by equalising everything: you don't need to worry about the antagonistic moral allegiances of the characters because, in this fog of colour, you can't tell them apart. David Hockney's designs for Glyndebourne are likewise beautiful but irrelevant. Rather than explaining *Die Zauberflöte*, they annex it, assigning it a place in Hockney's private pictorial world and begging every question about character and meaning as they do so.

The sets are actually a miracle of sleight-of-hand, so sly that none of the critics has noticed their intention, which is to transpose *Die Zauberflöte* from Egypt to Hockney's own fabled kingdom of America. The wilderness of the first scene conflates his two favoured American landscapes: stunted Los Angeles palm trees ring one of those granite boulders which thrust through the greenery of Central Park in New York. Hockney worked on the designs in New York, and they refer constantly to that city. The columned staircase in Sarastro's palace is adapted from that in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. One of the

sculptural heads lolling outside the red-brick pyramid has the bland inflexible countenance of the Statue of Liberty. The dragon, cap-sizing, puffs out smoke like the man in the Times Square cigarette advertisement. When at the end of the opera the stage is required to open into a solar emblem, Hockney makes from a radial Art Deco sunburst a bandstand exactly matching the interior of Radio City Music Hall (which someone said was the kind of place God might have built if he'd had the money).

The aerial perspective of Sarastro's estate with its grid of neatly planted blocks is the view of Manhattan from atop the Empire State Building. This scene also allows Hockney to wittily connect his cheerily depraved American hell, New York (to which he condemned his own version of Hogarth's rake), and his hedonistic bronzed American heaven, California. In apparent homage to Steinberg's famous *New Yorker* cover – which thins the continental sprawl of the United States into an arid strip between the Hudson River and the Pacific, eliminating the mid-west and chauvinistically siting California just beyond New Jersey – Hockney makes Sarastro's Manhattan taper towards Los Angeles: near the vanishing point of the perspective is an angular swimming pool glittering in a sandy waste. Other designs point south to Florida. The room in which Monostatos imprisons Pamina is made of striped canvas like a Miami Beach cabana; the three boys (who are girls) go about their celestial business in a nimbused golf-buggy. But Hockney's Newfoundland, his magic America of affluence and physical delectation, is apt to turn back into staid, stale England: at the foot of the Metropolitan Museum staircase Papageno feeds from a Glyndebourne picnic basket; Sarastro's chariot is drawn by toy Longleat lions with rotating heads.

The designs predestine John Cox's production, which has no alternative but to be unintelligently jokey. Hockney's dragon and the menagerie tamed by the flute garner huge laughs, but these shouldn't be merely comic stunts. The opera is about the helpless incorporation of human beings into nature and their magical levitation into spirit. It finds musical correlations for both these movements. The ascension from nature to spirit corresponds to the change from speech (the gabble of Schikaneder's text) to song (the lyrical redemption Mozart grants to the characters). The relapse from spirit to nature is marked by the retreat from song to baby-talk or angry inarticulacy: Monostatos's yelps of fear, Papageno's humming, the Queen's shrill yodelling. Music does duty for speech: Tamino's flute speaks on his behalf, and the priests sound trumpets to signify their accord with Sarastro; but speech also corrects the facile elation of music: Tamino is instructed by a Speaker, who sings only grudgingly as he

disappears. Tamino's initial flight from the dragon and his eventual musical subjugation of the beasts act out this dualism. He begins in terror of nature but ends aesthetically armed against it. Papageno on the contrary ends polyphiloprogenitively merged in nature, endlessly copulating with Papagena. *Die Zauberflöte* is a comedy because it insists that we are all victims of physical nature, until art or religion rescues us: the Queen of the Night wants to make a vengeful tragedy of it, and she therefore tells Pamina to cancel all the bonds of nature; it is not a panto for dressed-up grown-ups, as the Glyndebourne staging implies.

Characterisation is generally absent from the production. Tamino is an oafish sophomore, the Queen a fairground fortune-teller with a crystal ball, Monostatos a goliwog. Papageno alone has been thought about, and has been pilloried in the process. Benjamin Luxon plays him as a truculent prole, wearing his beaked cap back-to-front, carrying pliers to free Pamina, and bellowing the countdown to his threatened suicide like a boxing referee. Papageno is natural man. His cravings are biological; Tamino abstractly falls in love with a picture, but Papageno merely longs for a mate with whom he can reproduce small facsimiles of himself. He recoils from humanity into zoological safety, wishing he could turn into a mouse or a snail to escape Sarastro. Tamino, however, frets to become human, and renounces his heroic privileges to do so: more than a prince, Sarastro says, he is a man. Papageno is not merely, as Luxon plays him, a sullen artisan. This opera is not about class conflict, like *Le Nozze di Figaro*, but about the elemental union between all creatures.

Meanwhile at Covent Garden, Geraint Evans is giving his valedictory performances as Falstaff. Boito, Verdi's librettist, said that music restored Falstaff, traduced by Shakespeare in the shabby intrigues of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, to his 'clear Tuscan source' in Boccaccio. Evans repatriates him, playing Falstaff not as Boito's Italian sensualist but as an elderly Celtic inebriate. He is relinquishing the role in good time. It needs a healthy, agile voice, since Falstaff's theatrical self-invention is matched by a range of self-transforming vocal mimicry: the falsetto mimicry of Alice; the octave descent from the upper register in which Falstaff defends his chivalric prerogative of 'l'onore' to the growling rebuke of Bardolph and Pistol as 'ladri'; the instantaneous vocal slimming as he recalls his sleek, capering youth as a page. Evans no longer possesses the lyrical virtuosity, but his characterisation has the same ripe, doddering obscenity as before.

Solti begins brashly but settles down to demonstrate the unstable, vanishing beauty of the score. The music is teasing in a gustatory way: just as Falstaff abandons himself to the flux of sensation so the score is a succession of appetitive delights which are gone as soon as they're tasted, never to return. This is why the occasional recurrence of a motif is always rewarded with a laugh, because we've been permitted to enjoy a pleasure a second time, as if in a discreet musical belch. *Falstaff*, not *Otello*, is Verdi's *Tristan*. Wagner's morbidly passionate hero relaxes into the solitary pleasures of eating, drinking, and cultivating his embonpoint; and the treacherous chromatic transitions of Wagner's score become in Verdi a mercurially eager pursuit of momentary musical pleasures.

Television

Julian Barnes

Disinvesting Yourself

On the whole, I've always found it advisable to miss out on as many TV comedy series as possible. For one thing, you can avoid a lot of chintzy conversations about which of those Liver Birds is the whackier, what Leonard Rossiter really keeps under his sofa, and just which of the neighbours Penelope Keith reminds you of most. But on a slightly more theoretical level, it's always seemed a genre which is bound to prove disappointing. No half-way talented comic writer could bear to remain verbally inventive for episode after episode knowing that, if he were really lucky and successful, the programme might be shown just once more. So instead they push most of the load off on to 'character' (plus a little on to situation); and all the surrounding publicity reinforces this: the weekly TV-mag essays on 'Rangi Ram's best hot-curry recipes' and 'What Warren Mitchell really thinks of Alf Garnett'. Actor and character become so linked that normality in the actor is made to seem a flaw in the character he portrays: hence the 'revelations' some months ago that Arthur Mullard, the amiable gorilla of *Yus, My Dear*, actually manages to cobble together a fairly active sex-life.

For some time (or so they tell me), *The Good Life* (BBC-1) has been the top sitcommer to be had from the box. I sat through the special Royal performance quite docilely, though partly, to be honest, numb with outrage at the serious editorial misjudgment which excised the last 25 minutes of the France-Hungary match, which had been running late. It turned out to be quite a decent little show after all, though memorable entirely for the acting (oh, all right, the sets were good too). But you won't catch people digging each other in the ribs this week and murmuring lovingly, 'There is a maggot in English society and its name is socialism' or 'Your frame borders on the corpulent' – lines which burst the laughometer. They did so, of course, solely because of Penelope Keith's delivery; and the best moment in the show was purer, wordless acting: Richard Briers's paunchy parody of a weightlifter, all strut and shrug and twitch, before hoisting a bar with no weights on the end.

Two other comedy series have opened as well, and I can safely warn you off both of them. *The Pink Medicine Show* (LWT) would be a real sidesplitter if you were 18, very drunk, desperately in love with a doctor, and eager to show him or her that you were fantastically relaxed about bedpans and syrup of figs. LWT, in fact, had managed (unless they were naughtily playing with tapes) to assemble a studio audience who noisily fulfilled all these conditions; when they were shown a parody of the Gordon's gin ad (for Nodrog's – I'll write that again to help you – NODROG's syrup of figs, which ended with the slogan 'Nodrog's: Get Things Moving!'). they couldn't have been more delighted with

themselves, the actors, the scriptwriters, the studio chairs, etc. The only trouble was, the studio audience must have used up all the people in the country capable of being amused by such a show. It was pre-recorded, one assumes, so that the 200 or so drunken doctors' fiancé(e)s could stagger home and roar at themselves roaring at jokes like this: 'And now back to the studio and David Coleman'; cut to shot of a coalman loading a sack on his back.

While it's easy enough (and not unpleasant either) to sneer at such amateurish medical student pranks, one's first instinct with dungeoned provincial pub-and-club comics like Mike Harding is to hold back a bit. After all, a decent education and so on . . . After all, must get better. . . After all, might be *some* parts of the country where mothers-in-law and cowheel are quite fresh comic subjects. But this patronising sympathy was quite dispelled after a few minutes of *MH & 5p* (BBC-2) by the direness of a joker who has to have the words of his soliloquies written down in front of him (and tries to make it look like 'honest presentation'), and who needs to laugh at his own jokes to make sure he gets some comeback. Even the patrons of the Poco-a-Poco club in Stockport deserved better. Harding's only memorable line was 'She's got teeth like the 'Oly Commandments – ten, and all of them broke'; but I expect to be told that this is Kipling, or at least an old Stockport *mot*.

The Money Programme (BBC-2) is normally another no-go area of the week's viewing; largely because its pundits say things like 'Private people are now net disinvestors in land' with the expression of men putting things in almost insultingly comprehensible terms for hick viewers. By the time you've realised that disinvesting is probably what you and I would call selling, and that the statement is indeed comprehensible, a new log-jam of phrases has built up in the brain. For once, though, the programme had a manageable and provocative subject: the new ownership of agricultural land. Pension funds and insurance companies now own more than the Crown, and are buying up 25 per cent of all prime acreage that comes on to the market. The reason for the sudden availability of so much farmland, apparently, is the operation of Capital Transfer Tax. Quite right too; and the elegiac shots of the 11th Earl of Somewhere wandering round his former estate didn't hold the poignancy they were perhaps meant to.

James Bellini explained the financial mechanics of it all clearly enough; but the programme hardly left you confident about the institutions' motives and methods. The chairman of a farming company talked about modernisation of plant; a gathering of nut-brown gaffers in a pub seemed guardedly uncomplaining; but you couldn't see many advantages coming the way of the farmworkers. There'd been sackings; no one mentioned wages; and the new breed of farm managers seemed remote from the workers. Not only remote, you couldn't help noticing, but fond of the old feudal traditions as well. The viyella-shirted Man from the Pru – Eric Chapman, Chief Surveyor – called on one of his tenant farmers, James Sim (a man who might, perhaps, have his life insured with the Pru and thus be paying Chapman's salary). 'Hello, Sim.' 'Nice to see you, Mister Chapman.' Somewhere down in Dorking, I expect, they're hatching a sit-com on just this unlikely sort of theme.

Sport

Russell Davies

Man-Eat-Dog

My predictions for Scotland turned out to be the wrong way round. I should have foreseen the contrary way things would go. The win against Holland and the draw against Iran constitute a record entirely typical of the Scots, whose sense of nationhood is based on a seemingly ineradicable notion of themselves as underdogs. Meeting more 'powerful' nations, they are able to convert their inferiority complex into an active and inspiring resentment; but when they themselves have to play the favourite's role, they perform as though deeply convinced of their own unworthiness.

Their problem has never been one of raising their game against the big nations but in keeping it at normal levels of efficacy and ruthlessness against teams they know they should beat. So the Iran game was merely an agonised repeat of the Scots' failure to demolish Zaire in 1974; and MacLeod's biggest general fault has been that he failed to stop his team making the same psychological mistake they made four years ago.

The team-selection is another matter. Souness should obviously have been played right through the Scots' international programme, ever since it became clear that his move to Liverpool, far from disturbing his form, was enhancing it. By all accounts – and the rumours are certainly reflected in his play – Souness is a man whose inferiority-count is as close to zero as a Scot can reasonably hope to get. He might have done 'orrible things to Iran. MacLeod's refusal to play Johnstone is even more puzzling. Jordan admittedly did score in the first game, and achieved a perfect knockdown for Dalglish in the Holland win; but in between, as Jack Taylor remarked on TV (in the typically withering tones of a man who is used to having his authority confirmed by a uniform), he had done little but pick himself up off the floor. Johnstone should at least have been given a chance alongside Jordan against Iran. What was wrong? Did he get addicted to Argentinian Lucozade and put on three stone by the poolside? Had his budgie died? It is almost weird that Scotland's only goalscorer in the last three warm-up games (and a spectacular goalscorer, on one occasion) should never have got a kick.

Midweek matches may again prove me wrong, but I still fancy Italy to win, as long as the vital but recently booked Benetti can keep out of trouble. Somebody is going to have to beat Peru, who seem to have taken over wholesale the physical exuberance that Brazil have lost. Peru also have, in Cubillas, the tournament's nearest approach to the complete South American touch-player. But since the first 20 minutes against Scotland, they have been allowed to amuse themselves going forward an awful lot, and against a team that can close them down for ten minutes at a time they may find themselves getting bored to defeat.

Argentina have been overrated: their game against France was terrific, but a lot of what

was terrific about it came from France's extremely adventurous and praiseworthy style of play, and the supposed penalty against Trésor was the worst award we have seen. Besides, Argentina's liveliest player, Luque, has suffered an injury and a bereavement, and may not get his will-to-win back. Will-to-win has always been the Germans' best asset (as history ruefully records), so it is odd that they have had two goalless draws so far. They would probably settle for the same against Italy this Wednesday – but you will know all about that.

Closer to home, nothing this week interested me half as much as the interview Gordon Burn reported with the tennis-player Buster Mottram in the *Sunday Times* Colour Supplement. Mottram, who has big bones, a deliberately uglifying haircut and a mouth which seems to be bordered on every side by surly, pouting jowls, turns out to be a 'great supporter' of the National Front. He is a 'great believer in the survival of the fittest'. 'Every inch of the way,' he stated, 'it's man-eat-dog. Which is why the instincts of most tennis-players are well over to the Right. Don't single me out.' But it's hard not to single him out because, by and large, we don't hear a lot of this kind of thing from sportsmen, however well-equipped and well-trained they are to be mental and physical bullies.

Of course, I don't know any sportsmen to speak of – and the nearer one gets to sporting heroes the more 'fallible' they inevitably appear. I feel the days of my pure childhood admirations retreating that little bit further every time I am told of, say, a soccer-player who habitually plays with a hangover, or a Test Match bowler who is such a violent and obsessive seducer that he leaves his best deliveries in the bedroom.

But personal habits are one thing; racism is another. I had thought, in what remains of my

This English

An entry in 'This English' last week might have done for its more bashful sister-column in the literary half: 'Sid Vicious was sent for trial . . . accused of having drugs so small as to be invisible' – a devilish crime, certainly. We lead with two similar misappositions, plus two near-homophones and a nasty coinage. £3 for the first entry, £2 for the others printed. Paste entries on a postcard.

□ Nor indeed will the present managing director of the Slater Walker empire Mr Brian Banks (renamed and reconstituted as Britannia Arrow Holdings), be there. **Peter Hillmore** *Guardian* (P. Murphy)

□ More than 6,000 quasars have been discovered using optical telescopes . . . *The Times* (R. F. Holland)

□ The marriage contract – and it is a contract in law as well as a promise before God – states: 'First, it was ordained for the procurement of children.' Letters, *Guardian* (Pat Cross)

□ But there is no longer any doubt that the Kremlin has been appraised of President Carter's interest in a personal discussion, designed to get the SALT II talks back on the road. **Ian Aitken** *Guardian* (T. Theo Wills)

□ In spite of a fierce appearance his skills recall the more graceful, less brutal days of Argentinian football. *Guardian* (J. S. McKenzie)

innocence, that sporting people were more or less immune to it, if only because the experience of being beaten by black players encourages a general respect for the talents of the races from which they come. The faces of certain South African cricketers, I must admit, have sometimes given me moments of doubt (Mike Procter, for example, who may be a man of impeccably liberal opinions for all I know, is unfortunate enough to have the kind of puffy colonial complexion and carnivorous teeth behind which it is all too easy to imagine Mottramian thoughts a-festering); but on the whole, I have been able to keep this inverted prejudice within bounds. Mottram has not made it any easier, however; and already I find that my estimation of David Lloyd, the player whom Mottram recently accused, on court, of being not good enough to play for a British team, has shot up out of all proportion to his abilities. In fact, he appears to have turned several shades darker.

Radio

Peter Porter

Sound and Fury

Mr Aubrey Singer, the Managing Director of BBC Radio, and latest in a long line of new brooms imported to Broadcasting House from television, says he is happy to take on commercial radio, so we can look forward to a battle for the ratings such as TV has accustomed us to. Indeed, Mr Singer takes his comparisons directly from the great days of the BBC's fight with the ITV Apollyon – 'I see in radio a touch of the old licence-to-print-money time of 1956–57,' he states. I hope he's wrong, because that is one battle BBC Radio is ill-prepared to enter. Mr Singer has noticed that even the equipment in Broadcasting House is decrepit and out-of-date, and that there isn't money enough to separate Radios 3 and 4 on many evenings. His all-night network and his vision of four refurbished and reinvigorated channels will cause more hollow laughter than springing steps in Broadcasting House unless there is more cash from somewhere. Whether Capital is printing any money I can't say, but I suspect it is winning against Radio 1. My own sporadic listening to the two stations (reinforced by spontaneous market-testing of the teenagers who come to my house) shows that Capital has a clear edge. On the other hand, none of the other commercial stations (in and around or out of London) offers much of a challenge to the BBC. Nor do I see a boom in local radio making much difference – there will always be an audience for national broadcasting. If there is a sickness in BBC radio, then it is largely due to the Corporation's habit of infecting itself. Nobody high up seems to know where to go, and the old-time professionals, who didn't mind being underpaid, are dying out. Today, more than ever, the legendary description of the BBC as an organisation subsidised by the people who work for it seems most apposite.

One of the more sanguine of Mr Singer's hopes for the future is to bring back features

to Radio 3. Some of BBC-2's willingness to spend money would certainly help that network. And since the Corporation is so given to visiting its own past nostalgically, we might get a series of the great days of Features Department – it could run for months. The Singer era could lead to a revival of radio as a medium for artistic experiment, but, if it does, I hope that the emphasis will be on new modes of thought rather than new technical devices. Radiosonics, binaural sound, total radio and the rest of the innovations of the past ten years are useful to imaginative producers and writers, but not worth much consideration in themselves. A programme which does not employ some kind of innovatory technique in sound production is unlikely to win the Italia Prize, yet no breakthrough of this sort has done much to prompt the imaginative responses of writers and artists. The truth about radio is that there are ample technical resources available already, but too few writers are attracted to the medium, and experiment is left to the mechanically-minded.

There have been a number of trial programmes recently allegedly enfranchising sound itself. These specifically distinguish between 'sound' and 'sound effects', as if the latter were just old-fashioned props, like the famous BBC seagull. *Oil Rig* took us, via headphones and the auditorium of our brains, on to a North Sea drill. It was a vertiginously noisy programme, but still used a lot of words. *The Revenge* (Radio 3) is the first piece of radio drama made up of sound alone. Well, there were words, but you could tell what trouble the actors had taken to keep them indistinguishable – rather like those strange homophones employed in more sedate days for the stronger swear-words. They were emitted by pursuers and crowds, and other manifestations of the vox populi. There was also an inordinate amount of whistling, humming and heavy breathing. *The Revenge* was 'written' by Andrew Sachs. Apparently, it took up a challenge issued by Tom Stoppard that the sound of things is more important than dialogue, and so why not write a radio play entirely without words.

I cannot imagine Stoppard lending his name to the sort of drama which Mr Sachs devised. I am convinced that the whole melodrama was plotted out in detail and then the ingenuity of the sound recordists was put to work on telling the story in noises alone. This seems to me the opposite of experiment, and the pleasure derived by the listener is wholly of the puzzle-solving order. Is he under water now? Was that the cat or a bad tremor in the refrigerator? He must be dialling 999, etc. The story was easy to follow, though there were probably many individual refinements of noise which I missed. A man is on the run, pursued by dogs; he shakes them off in a river, clobbers a motorcyclist and changes into his clothes – and so on, up to the vengeful murder by drowning in the bath, and the call to the police to give himself up. It takes 23 minutes, and I have to report that they were a long time passing. Beckett, Albee and even the average Radio 4 play use their ambience more interestingly. *The Revenge* showed that sound alone is not enough.

Other strange sounds have proved more arresting. The sound of French actors in excerpts from *Briannicus*, after we had heard the whole play in English translation (Radio 3), was a shock. In English, it might have been a continuation of *I, Claudius* – witty, rational,

argumentative and entirely plausible. French poetry is something again: the oracular and the banshee combined. Not only our languages but the sounds we make with them will not translate. *For the Whales* (Radio 4), an hour's threnody for the impending disappearance of the largest of earth's creatures, began with whales singing at sea. They sounded like foghorns performing the final scene of *Salome*, but had their gentler moods too. Their plangent voices provided a good ritornello to the horrifying account of mankind's bestial behaviour to its immense and gentle brother. The Japanese emerged as the villains, which was a nice nostalgic touch, but I do not think producers should allow actors, representing Japanese spokesmen, to adopt such crudely caricatured accents – fiendish orientals with mouths full of sukiyaki (or whale meat).

Films

John Coleman

Frightmare

The Comeback (X) ABCs Shaftesbury Avenue, Edgware and Fulham Roads; Classic, Oxford Street

The Brute (X) Studio 1; Cinecenta 3

Bilitis (X) ABC2, Shaftesbury Avenue; Plaza 2; Studio 2; ABCs Fulham Road and Baywater, from 22 June

Allonsanfan (AA) Camden Plaza

We were recently rebuked by a constant reader for not paying more attention to *British* films. Now we are not taking that from anyone, dear girl though she is, so let what follows be on her head. Last year our National Film Theatre played a season of his work to 'capacity business'; every movie he has made has achieved theatrical distribution in the States; his titles include *School for Sex*, *Tiffany Jones*, *House of Whipcord*, *Frightmare*, *The House of Mortal Sin* and *Schizo*. Ladies and Gentlemen, I give you Pete Walker: and *The Comeback* – not that he ever went away. The return in question is rather that of pop recording star, Nick (Jack Jones), both to England and to a new disc-making career after six years in a bad marriage to Gail (Holly Palance). Aably abetted by writer Murray Smith, Mr Walker as producer-director soon has Nick up to his neck in horrors as well as positively festooned with red herrings. Hardly a ghoulish cliché of the Cinema of Nasty is missing: liberally bloodied corpses – scythed down by a white-haired womanish thing – rotting and a-crawl with worms and rats; a country mansion where the nights are full of sobs, mad laughter, owl hoots and clocks shockingly chiming; a recording manager who is also a transvestite; a soothing, useless psychiatrist; the walling-up of the living with the long dead.

The many references to *Psycho*, Poe, *The Cat and the Canary* are so blatant they almost overcome disgust. The fact that Mr Walker has brought off the paradoxical feat of laying more non-sequiturs end to end than any man in Christendom paralyses normal mental pro-

cesses further. Then add that it is often very funny. There is the dialogue. 'Corpse in a wheelchair – now what could that be symbolic of?' muses a pretty girl dining with Nick. He is brusque. 'Never mind symbolic, sunshine. It was fucking there.' The psychiatrist (Richard Johnson, guesting) later reassures: 'The French call it *fatigue mentale*.' When Nick wakes up after a five-day sleep cure, a smiling nurse says she has been instructed to explain tactfully what happened. 'What happened?' 'You went nuts,' she beams. Most of the characters and all of the performances go way over the top, and Bill Owen has a small ball as Mr B., apparent gardener and handyman out at the Gothic manse where Nick has been installed to record. But the absolute prize goes to his Scottish wife, Mrs B. (Sheila Keith), for pronouncing every single syllable accorded to her as a threat to humankind in general, sharpening a knife to cut cake as if she were Madame Guillotine, reducing Judith Anderson's celebrated housekeeper in *Rebecca* to the geniality of a geisha girl. They talk of Pete Walker as a 'cult' figure among buffs, some buffs. May he remain so.

Our second British X goes to Gerry O'Hara's *The Brute*, two years old and just into the metropolis after some sloping around the provinces. This is a nearly classic example of how to pervert a serious theme, wife-battering, into another sort of pulp. A beautiful wife and mother, Diana, finds her executive husband (Julian Glover) increasingly brutal. She escapes, after a particularly severe beating-up, to friends, a black girl and her boyfriend, fashion photographer Mark. Mark is très hip and rapidly making love to Diana on the side: 'You like it a little rough, don't you?' Most of the world in which this sordid business is conducted is ad-chic, Diana being a sought-after model on the side. Reconciliation with hubby becomes impossible after he tries to brand her with an iron-shaped D, and the plot ludicrous as it hinges on her recovery – with the help of a frog-man – of said weapon. There is a thoroughly decent performance from Jenny Twigg as a fellow-batteree, forced to live for a while in a commune for such unfortunates. But as a document of any possible truth or value, the piece falls flat on its potential profits. Mr Glover is strong and excellent (if inexplicable – he also seems to enjoy wearing drag) as the psychopath; and a last, total failure of the exercise is that as pacific a fellow as I was left feeling a tiny temptation to boot glam Diana up the arse myself.

Bilitis, putting our final X into the basket, is largely French-staffed, with Francis Lai ladling out a score and Henri Colpi probably very much on hand as technical adviser and editor. But David Hamilton, admittedly a long-time resident of Provence, made it and – although dubbing may not have helped an extraordinarily silly script, skiddingly based on Pierre Louys's *Les Chansons de Bilitis*, by Anne-Marie Garcia – must take the blame. Fans of Hamilton's photography will know that he specialises in soft-focus snaps of budding girleens wearing not much and looking pensive, i.e. thinking not much. His film – 'it's the story of a young girl's first summer love, a special season of a special year somewhere between 1940 and 1980' (his quote) – is really an excuse for him to animate a series of sub-erotic poses, like flicking through a bookful of stills. My favourite bit is near the beginning, where a nubile bunch of pōsh

schoolgirls are escorted by an amiable teacher to the beach: 'Now, girls, I know it was too late to go to the abbey,' she cries, and off they all romp, starkers, into the Med. There is a fair ration of tasteful love-making, the best of it – to straighten my kinks out in the open – lesbian. I was fugitively reminded both of the book *Lolita* and the Australian movie, *Picnic at Hanging Rock*. Then I was reminded it was time for lunch.

The brothers Taviani made *Allonsanfan* in 1974, some while before the rightly acclaimed *Padre Padrone*. It is a peculiar kind of costume drama, set back in Italy in 1816, the year of restoration following Napoleon's defeat. It centres on one Fulvio (Marcello Mastroianni), an aristo first seen – in a memorable sequence – released from jail after his revolutionary activities: red-shirted, he descends a great flight of steps being caned all the way down by gentlemen in black hats. Once out and away, he is swooped on by a band in Ku-Klux-Klannish outfits and shoved into a cart. They turn out to be brother-revolutionaries, the Sublime Brethren, in fact, and they quickly put him on al fresco trial, suspecting him of having betrayed them under torture.

All the action occurs against magnificent settings, both interior and exterior, and the queasy mood for the whole film has been established. The Tavianis are known for their admiration of opera and non-realism: it becomes clearer (or muddier, if you will) from *Allonsanfan* that their sympathies – unquestionably leftist – are divided. To cut a 100-minute story short, Fulvio is displayed as a reluctant activist, a sort of anti-Candide, happy to be allowed back into the bosom of

his ancestral home but forced by events (the arrival of his fiery Hungarian mistress, superb Lea Massari, and her death) to rejoin his old comrades. There is a finely orchestrated, utterly confused and ill-fated attempt by the Brethren to go on spreading revolt; there is a terrible, sad cluster of red-shirted bodies as they go down under the peasantry; in confusion, too, Fulvio dies. Superlative images abound. The message would seem to be that there will always be traitors in the camp, also that radicals should argue less, plan more, get on with it.

Theatre

Benedict Nightingale

Those Were the Days

I'm Talking About Jerusalem Shaw
Macbeth Olivier

I'm Talking About Jerusalem brings to an end the first chance we reviewers have had to reassess what is rather grandly known as the Wesker Trilogy; and the experience has been well worth the predictable irritations, such as the sometimes cumbersome exegesis, the occasional bum line and, more seriously, the author's intermittent failure to adjust his mask properly when he feels the need to intrude on the action. But when the sprawling saga lives, it really lives, and nowhere more arrestingly than in the first instalment, *Chicken Soup with Barley*, which introduces us to the Kahn family on the exhilarating day the East End closed its streets to Mosley's marchers, and leaves it in mental and spiritual disarray just after the Soviet invasion of Hungary. As Kenneth Tynan wrote of the original production, Wesker 'thinks internationally, but feels domestically'. He comes to the fray armed with telescope and microscope and, by some freak of dramatic physics, manages to use both at once: his people are claustrophobically close, painfully dependent on one another, and yet they instinctively find their justification in political faith and public works. What other playwright of the 1950s would have allowed the juvenile lead's first line to be the boast that he's sold 250 May Day leaflets in an hour-and-a-half? And how many of the socially-aware scribes of the Seventies could so exactly and lovingly chronicle the ins and outs and rights and wrongs of the wrangling, nagging marriage shared by the redoubtable matriarch Sarah Kahn and her reclusive husband, Harry?

Oddly, it's the second panel of the triptych that is the least satisfying, though it's the one most familiar to several generations of examinees. *Roots* bundles us off to Norfolk, and takes an inordinate time establishing the ignorance, apathy and mean-mindedness of the rural rump. It then proceeds to denounce these vices through the mouth of Beatie Bryant, who is forever quoting half-assimilated gobbets from the collected wit and wisdom of her boy-friend, Ronnie Kahn. At

the play's celebrated climax he rejects her by post, a trauma that somewhat improbably leaves her spouting more of the socialist enlightenment he has taught her, but this time at first hand. I confess that this has always inclined me to sympathise, not with the inspirational evangelist, but with the poor goons she treats so condescendingly; and neither Anthony Cornish's thoughtful production nor Frances Viner's peppy Beatie succeeded in shifting my feelings. But in fairness to Wesker I should also admit that this may be as much a judgment on me as on him. He has spent a lifetime attacking those habits of embarrassment and fastidiousness that make it hard for the English to cry glory hallelujah to hopeful news, and embarrassment and fastidiousness are, I daresay, co-authors of this review.

Jerusalem is the most patchily acted of Mr Cornish's productions, and yet it still makes a solidier impact than its rather flimsy reputation promised. Play one ends in what you might call macropolitical disillusion, and play three, like play two, involves a micropolitical experiment. Perhaps individual missionaries, like Beatie, will spread socialism. Or perhaps, as many of our contemporary communards seem to think, William Morris had the solution. But Dave Simmonds and his wife Ada, née Kahn, are obliged to abandon their exercise in country living and craftsmanship, and it ends by proving nothing except perhaps that it is foolhardy to blinker yourself to industry, technological progress and the city. It's an honest deduction but one clearly distressing to Wesker, whose dramatic surrogate, Ronnie, openly blubs outside the deserted carpentry shop.

'We must be bloody mad to cry,' he wails, a closing line that half-echoes Sarah's last words in *Chicken Soup*, 'you've got to care or you'll die'. Utopia remains as elusive and remote as ever, yet virtue consists in continuing to strive for it. That's the tacit conclusion of the trilogy, and the code by which Wesker has gone on writing, though not often, it has to be admitted, as vividly and attractively. The Shaw's revival is an apt reminder, at a time when it is fashionable to shrug him off, of the playwright he once was, to some extent still is, and may one day be again.

One trouble with Peter Hall's *Macbeth* is that it comes to town as Trevor Nunn's high-voltage production leaves it. How could the play achieve a comparable intensity when the wide-open spaces of the Olivier have been substituted for those black holes, the Warehouse and Young Vic? How could there be the same sense of intimacy with evil when the rapt introvert, McKellen, is replaced by the sauntering extrovert, Finney? Actually, it is a fluent, speedy, sensible production, eccentric only in its emphasis on the surely apocryphal Hecate, in its view a lissom beauty in black who stands above Elizabeth Spriggs's down-at-heel socialite, Rosamund Greenwood's twee maiden aunt, and the other three or four witches, watching as they bop about the cauldron, brandishing their tattered bottoms at the gawping tyrant. But if Sir Peter's attempt to evoke a metaphysical hierarchy is a bit implausible, he and his co-director, John Russell Brown, make few slips with the physical one. For instance, they use the brief, background-setting encounter between Ross and Macduff to bring out, in the gentlest way, the mutual suspicion and edginess of the nobility now their world has turned awry. We feel,

Hugo Williams

A Distant Prospect

O'Sullivan's Record Exchange
In the Peskett Street Market
Was out of bounds to Lower Boys
On account of Miss O'Sullivan's taste
In music. We used to jive
In the listening booths
When she turned the volume up for us,
Knowing we wouldn't buy.
It was the best she could do.
You couldn't hear that kind of thing
Any other way in 1956. The

overloaded wires

Must have set fire to the partitioning.
They had to throw hundreds of
Twisted 78's into the street.

O'Sullivan's Record Exchange,
Its record-covered walls suspended in
Their own flames, still seems to welcome me
With all my favourite tunes
And Miss O'Sullivan,
Moving her arms over the turntables
Like one who heals. When I'm caught
Loitering in the new car park
Off Peskett Street ten years from now
And taken for questioning, I'll know
What to expect: 'Look here old boy,
The past is out of bounds, you should
know that.'

'But sir', I'll say, 'where else is there to go
On these half-holidays?'

for once, that Macbeth's castle is a place of substance, not just the focus of some medieval squat, and for once the grisly dinner-party in Act Three is an important state function, not a desultory picnic in the woodshed.

Still, it's less important that we should sup full with Macbeth than that he himself should sup full with horrors; and here we come up against Albert Finney, who would hardly recognise a horror if it was two feet across the tablecloth from him, slurping spaghetti down its bib. The supporting performances are pretty capable: Daniel Massey's anguished Macduff, Nicky Henson's self-satisfied Malcolm, and, at least *in extremis*, Dorothy Tutin's Lady Macbeth. Miss Tutin's vowels are apt to flutter too prettily; she isn't a naturally steely actress, and, despite the masculine walk she affects, doesn't suggest she could browbeat anyone into murdering a monarch; she makes too little attempt to chart the process of decline, and so doesn't prepare us for the sleepwalking scene; and yet, when that climax comes, it throbs with torment and despair, excusing much. No, the problem is Finney's Macbeth, a tough, carefree soldier whose voice thickens, manner coarsens and temper fractures when he discovers that the successful takeover of Scotland needs more than military skill. He has his moments, notably when he's flashing menacing smiles or displaying a wry gallows-humour – 'thou wast born of woman'. Give him a hump, and he might be Richard III. Relieve him of his vocal flutings and soarings, and he might be a good Richard III. But Macbeth, to be Macbeth, needs something more: for instance, a soul, to fester within, and short hairs on the nape of the neck, to bristle outside. Finney lacks depth and he lacks dread, a dual deficiency that would leave the play gaping wherever and however it was staged.

Weekend Competition

No 2519

Set by Spiro Keats

I have often wondered what it was that made me turn my back on the pure and cloistered life of academic research ... It has been said that, since nearly all subjects of genuine interest have been exhausted, critics will soon be reduced to writing theses on, say, the household accounts of Gerard Langbaine or the tram-tickets of Lascelles Abercrombie. My guess, though, is that they will simply move on to crummier authors. The Blind Alley: Switch-Blade Imagery in Late Harold Robbins. The Stricken Foal: Versions of Compassion in James Herriot. More such titles, please, by 30 June.

Result of No 2516

Set by Spiro Keats

That rhyming-slang comp of mine: 'I bought a new pair of *Jekylls* today.' Trousers, via strides, via Jekyll and Hydes. The point was, do you see, that the slang word should be at two removes from the original.

Report

by Spiro Keats

I had to relieve a struggling Fatboy this week, stepping in at the eleventh hour – with a sneer of cold command, a strident snap of my potent

fingers, etc. – to salvage this bright brute of a comp. A certain amount of point-missing was going on at your end too: I am aware that much rhyming-slang is already at two removes from its originals, but we didn't just want *more* rhyming-slang. However, I found myself favouring the sort of locutions that I could imagine coming from the lips of the barrow-boys and so on who supposedly came up with the habit in the first place. I've rewritten you all rather, I'm afraid. Mr Anderson, who is clearly a criminal of some kind, will be receiving an unmarked Nightingale from me in due course. Otherwise, a Wilson per coinage. Honourable mentions to Moray McGowan, P. J. D. Gething, C. Vita-Finzi and Diana Boyes, and thanks to you all. Answers at the foot of the column, if you really need them.

Soon after the *Khyber* had been on the *Percy* to the local *three-card*, two *Cillas* picked up Jimmy who had blown the *paraffin* at the town's last remaining *Simons*. Later, when sentenced to three years by the *bubble*, Jimmy wasn't too put out. The last time he had done *lemon*, he had got on well with the *panoramics* and had made quite a bit on the side dealing in *rainbow*.

FRANK ANDERSON

Look, love, I'm nearly *Trebor* – all right if we go *Starsky*? We went out on a real *Stephen* the other night. You get a slap-up *Hieronymous* at the Golden Egg. Capone surrounded himself with vicious *Birnams*.

BILL GREENWELL

With *Alfreds* like you, who needs enemies? She's got the looks, but is she a good *Irish*?

ROBERT BAIRD

This is the red-light district, where all the *Santas* are. He's a funny old *Brighton*, isn't he?

In the winter, there's nothing like a warm pair of *Derrys*.

PAT BLACKFORD

Do all women's-libbers suffer from *April-envy*? The old boy came in very *Tom* again last night.

A. L. DENNIS

I feel well *Kerried*. What a day!

BARRY ANTHONY

Excuse me, but where's the *Quintin*? I'm gasping for a *Melvyn*.

R. D. CONDON

He was rolling *Oliver*, and none too steady on his *Huckleberries*.

W. S. BROWNLIE

Got my number? Give me a *Rip Van* any time.

SARA SPAIN

Having opened the batting, he went on to make a lovely *Dombey*.

S. E. WOODS

Did he *bangers* his hampton up on the heath last night?

T. GRIFFITHS

There was an old *Julius* selling newspapers in the street.

A. J. WYBORN

Answers. ANDERSON: grass, blower, nick, jacks (policemen), peter (safe), uncle's (pawnbroker's), beak, bird (time in prison), screws, snout. GREENWELL: skint, dutch, bender, nosh, hoods. BAIRD: friends, screw. BLACKFORD: whores, cove, comms. DENNIS: tool, merry. ANTHONY: knackered. CONDON: bog, fag. BROWNLIE: pissed, pins. SPAIN: tinkle. WOODS: ton. GRIFFITHS: flash. WYBORN: geezer.



Tony Miles

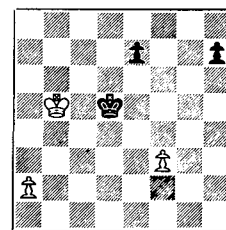
Chess

No 87

April Problems

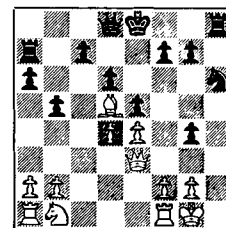
The April problems were a mysterious bunch, the entries displaying an almost unbelievable uniformity. The one exception to this was problem 79 which was ruined by a typographical error. The positions of the White king on KB2 and pawn on KN1(!) should have been reversed.

Problem 78 was completely straightforward, and every entrant solved it correctly. Problem 80 (see diagram), on the other hand, a 'simple' king and pawn ending, wreaked absolute havoc. It was not difficult to find the variations: a) 1. P-R4, K-Q3; 2. K-N6, P-R4; 3. P-R5, P-R5; 4. P-R6, P-R6; 5. P-R7, P-R7; 6. P-R8=Q, P-R8=Q; 7. Q-B6ch, K-K4; 8. P-B4ch winning; and b) 1. P-R4, K-Q3; 2. K-N1, K-Q2; 3. K-N7, P-R4; 4. P-R5, P-R5; 5. P-R6, P-R6; 6. P-R7, P-R7; 7. P-R8=Q, P-R8=Q; 8. Q-B8ch, K-Q3; 9. Q-B6ch with the same result. In fact it was the very plausibility of these lines that made it so hard to find 1... K-K3!! and if 2. P-R5, K-Q2! and K-B1 or 2. K-N6 (or B6) P-R4 and in both cases Black draws. Any entrant who fell victim to this trap can console himself with the thought that he was not alone. Had he not he would have been completely alone, which seems to prove that you can fool all of the people some of the time!



Problem 81, taken from a game Miles — Mestrovic from Lone Pine (2r5 / 4k3 / 1p4pp / nP1rP3 / R1p1NK2 / 2P5 / 6PP / R7), also caused trouble. 1. RxN! is a fairly obvious starter. The preparatory 1. N-Q6 also attracted some votes, but that fails to 1... R-B1ch; 2. K-K4, K-K3 and if 3. NxP, NxN; 4. RxN, RxPch drawing, or 3. RxN?? RxPch; 4. K-Q4, R-B5ch, 5. N-K4, R(5)xN mate.

So 1. RxN! PxR; 2. RxP leaves White with a winning position, with two strong passed pawns and a dominant king position for the exchange. In many cases he can even give up the QNP and still win. For instance 2... R-B1ch; 3. N-B6, R-B4; 4. R-R7ch, K-K3; 5. R-R6ch, K-K2; 6. K-K4, R-Q1; (RxNP is no better) 7. P-N6, R-N4; 8. P-N7, RxP; 9. N-Q5ch, K-B2; 10. P-K6ch, K-N2; (or K-K1, P-K7) 11. P-K7, R-K1; 12. R-K6, K-B2; 13. K-K5, R-Q2; 14. R-B6ch, K-N2; 15. K-K6, RxN; 16. R-B7ch, K-N1; 17. R-B8ch winning. However, it seems that Black can refute White's combination with 2... P-N4ch; 3. K-B5, R-B1ch; but White has the pretty counter trick 4. N-B6! RxNch; 5. K-K4! regaining the rook with an easy win. It was this variation that was intended to be the point of the problem: surprisingly only one entrant spotted it.



Problem 87

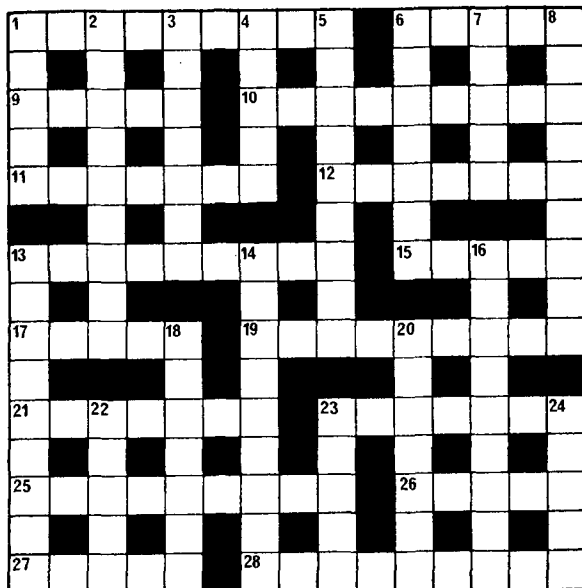
Black to play. How should the game go? Answers to me at the NEW STATESMAN post-marked not later than 28 June.

Solution to Problem 85

1... Q-B6; 2. R-KN1 (if 2. PxN, QxBch wins easily.) Q-N7ch! Resigns, since 3. RxQ, N-B6ch; 4. K-R1, R-Q8ch forces mate.

Weekend Crossword 1266

PRIZES: Book tokens of £2 for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1266, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1V 7JH, by first post 27 June.



ACROSS

1. Strange pair mean to hold nothing in place (9).
6. Handed over about a pound for something to wear (5).
9. Writing back about drink as source of energy (5).
10. I can dust nothing for the person in charge (9).
11. Such a one leaves all but the beginning (7).
12. Taking average time (7).
13. Place which makes people ill without fresh air (9).
15. The woman in the picture is as hard as nails (5).
17. Pardon right before sentence is reversed (5).
19. Quiet opportunity for a game (9).
21. The disturbed can rest in sleepy conditions (7).
23. Curse at an animal's disappearance? (7).
25. One of these equalisers is a bit more than a yard inside the bar (9).
26. There is nothing missing from the fruit in this cooker (5).
27. Cries when you are given records (5).

28. The metal is thereabouts beaten (9).

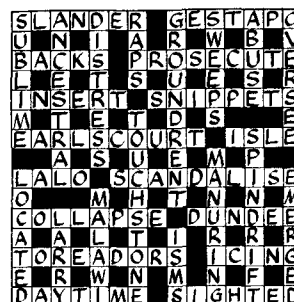
DOWN

1. Assume one is in a job (5).
2. Loose morals met as a cause of destruction (9).
3. Rush round madly in an overtime racket (7).
4. Treasure of the deep found in a northern area (5).
5. Where stream changes course over obstruction (9).
6. Obscure people discover nothing in funny poster (7).
7. The excuse would be first-class if there weren't a party (5).
8. Rudely enter a dig to ruin a reputation (9).
13. Make a mess of it with a friend, so only in wedlock! (9).
14. Shattering piece of news (9).
16. Drink when new rounds have been ordered (9).
18. Touches lightly with part of stick lest it hurts (7).
20. Artist depicts famous Oriental with his garden (7).

22. Block in Roman villa (5).
23. Do as I do for woman (5).
24. Journalist gets round staff to make corrections (5).

SET SQUARE

Solution to No 1264



Prizewinners to No 1264

Mrs M. E. Owen (Stroud)
Dr J. M. Bennett (Crowle)
Miss E. M. Tibbits
(St Leonards-on-Sea)

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The Spastics Society

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Application form and further details available from **John Brown, Assistant Director, Scottish Film Council, 16 Woodside Terrace, Glasgow G3 7XN.** Closing date for receipt of applications 30 June 1978.

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West Midlands District

Applications are invited for two separate posts:

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Salary scale: £2,913 - £4,643 (under review). For both posts: Initial salary according to qualifications and experience; commencing date as soon as possible. For full particulars and application forms write, enclosing s.a.e., to the District Secretary, WEA, 9/11 Digbeth, Birmingham B5 6BH. Closing date for applications for both posts: 30 June 1978.

UNIVERSITY OF IBADAN — NIGERIA

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Expertise in either Methods and Quantitative Techniques or Public Administration (with emphasis on public policy analysis) or International Relations (with emphasis on conflict/peace analysis or futuristics) or Comparative Politics (with emphasis on political economy or Political Theory (with emphasis on positive theory. Candidates should possess a PhD in the relevant field of specialisation. Candidates for the Senior Lectureship should have had at least five years University teaching experience but for the Lectureship, some experience of University teaching would be an advantage.

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GREATER LONDON ARTS ASSOCIATION

wishes to fill two impending vacancies in its arts team and to appoint an

ARTS OFFICER AND ARTS ASSISTANT with special responsibility for the visual arts

As part of the Association's broad role of promoting the arts in the region of Greater London, it is concerned to provide increasing opportunities for accessibility to participate in the visual arts. Its current programme includes the funding of galleries and exhibitions, community printshops, photographic projects, murals, and an artist Award Scheme, and research and advice to local government, institutions and individuals.

The incoming Officer will be especially concerned in developing new exhibition spaces, investigating touring and exchange schemes, and strengthening community provision for the visual arts. The Officer will have also a general arts liaison role with a group of London Boroughs.

The Assistant will help in the administration of grant applications and projects, in the provision of advice and information to clients, and give secretarial support to the Officer.

Salary scales: Arts Officer £4,318 - £5,500; Arts Assistant £3,511 - £4,230.

Full details and application forms from the Director, Greater London Arts Association, 25/31 Tavistock Place, London WC1H 9SF. Closing date for full applications: 7 July 1978.

CONTRACT PROGRAMME RESEARCHERS

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Researchers who would like to work on a range of new and established programmes within an expanding department, should write to Senior Personnel Officer, Thames Television Limited, 306 Euston Road, London NW1, or telephone 01-387 9494 Ext 696.



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Field Secretary

The Field Secretary will liaise with students in the UK through local WUS groups, student unions and relevant organisations. S/he will encourage participation in development education work, international small project funding and Third World Scholarship campaigns. A driving licence is essential. Salary on a scale from £3,570 p.a.

Closing date for completed applications 29 June 1978.

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This new post has been established to provide information on refugees in two main areas relating to legal status. First to advise and assist refugees on WUS Scholarships within the UK regarding problems resulting from their legal status. Secondly to carry out analysis and research and lobbying to establish the need for development of a coherent framework for refugee legal protection, both within UK and internationally. Candidates will need to have either a degree in law or have considerable practical experience of refugee law. Previous knowledge and experience of working with refugees would be a distinct advantage. Salary is on a scale £4,629 to £5,349 p.a.

Caseworker

Due to the expansion of our African Scholarship Programme, a second post is being established for a caseworker to advise and counsel refugee award holders throughout their course of study. The work also involves presentation of individual cases to awards committee. Candidates will need to be sympathetic to the problems facing refugees and previous experience of counselling and casework of a similar nature would be an advantage. Salary is on a scale £3,570 to £4,290 p.a. (under review).

Closing date for completed applications 30 June 1978.

For further details write to: **The Associate Secretary, 20/21 Compton Terrace, London N1 2UN.**

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Salary will be on the local government scale SO1, starting at £4,760 p.a.

For further details, write to: **Ian Watson, Director, South West Arts, 23 Southernhay East, Exeter EX1 1QL**, to whom applications should be sent to arrive by 1 July. It is hoped to hold interviews of shortlisted candidates in the week beginning 17 July.

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**The Administrator,
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(Closing date for completed forms Friday, 7 July).

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WANTED! BOOKWORMS & DISCOWORMS. Our edition of 30 June will contain a 'Bookworm'/'Discoworm' column. Any books, publications, periodicals or records you want can be advertised for 50 pence a line (av. 6 words per line, min. 2 lines. Box No. 50p). Please send remittance with order to: Bookworm/Discoworm, New Statesman, Great Turnstile, London WC1.

THE JOURNAL OF ANALYTICAL Psychology, the international Jungian periodical. Subscription £8 p.a. p.f. Brochure on request. 30 Devonshire Place, London W1.

RUSSIA, EASTERN EUROPE WORLD Affairs. Books bought and sold. A. C. Hall, 30 Staines Road, Twickenham, Middx.

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MALE, SE London. Teacher, non-smoker, with son, seeks caring relationship with compatible female. Theatres, classical music, sailing. Box 1794.

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MALE, sep., 55, seeks female company for London theatre and camping holiday in Alps August. Box 1820.

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MY MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM is to have a new man in my life. Someone to share concerts, Glyndebourne, the Proms and Art exhibitions, so as to make this a delightful summer. Ideally he should be over 45, unconventional with like me a great capacity for enjoying life. Need this be just a dream, or will someone answer Box 1778.

WIDOW, 45, good figure, medium height, socialist, varied interests, house-owner, seeks friendship with man 50-55. Sense of humour and kindness essential. Amersham area. Box 1776.

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FEMALE, 40s, slim, attractive, intelligent seeks aesthetic, perceptive male of integrity to help allay disenchantment. East Midlands. Box 1770.

NOT DROWNING but waving lady, 40s, middlebrow, wishes to marry, or enjoy company of, nice man, Wiltshire area. Box 1815.

MALE ACADEMIC (40s), at Hull sks friendship with considerate female, who enjoys range of interests incl. music. Box 1852.

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NEW STATESMAN

Vol. 95 No. 2465

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Theatres

ALDWYCH THEATRE (Royal Shakespeare Company), 836 6404. Strindberg's 'The Dance of Death' and Shakespeare's 'Coriolanus' in repertoire (See daily press for dates and times). RSC also at The Warehouse and at the Piccadilly Theatre in Peter Nichols' 'Privates on Parade'.

CHICHESTER. 0243 81312. 16, 17, 19, 22 June at 7.00. 24 June at 2.00 'A Woman of No Importance'. 17 & 22 June at 2.00, 20, 21, 23 & 24 June at 7.00 'The Inconstant Couple'.

HAMPSTEAD THEATRE 722 9301. Georgina Hale, Susan Hampshire, Richard Moore, Peter Woodthorpe in 'The Tribades' by Per Olof Enquist. Mon.-Fri. 8 p.m. Sats. 5 & 8 p.m. 'A fascinating play' Guardian. 'Crackles with sexual battle. Electrifying Times'. 'A very fascinating play' Daily Telegraph.

THEATRE ROYAL, WINDSOR. 95 61107. From Tues., Mary Kerridge, Veronica Strong & Jonathan Elsom in 'Hay Fever' by Noel Coward.

POLESDEN LACEY OPEN AIR. Great Bookham, Surrey. 'Henry V' 28 June-1 July; 'The Taming of the Shrew' 5-8 July at 7.45 (Sat. Matinee 3 p.m.). Bookings 10-7 p.m. (1 p.m. Sat.). Bookham 52241. Free transport from Station, Bookham 53133.

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Concert

MAHLER Adagio-Symphony 5, Symphony 10. Performing version by Deryck Cooke. Conductor Joseph Pilbery. Southwark Cathedral, London Bridge, SE1. Sunday 25 June, 8 p.m. Tickets £1.50, £1.00, 80p from Southwark Entertainments 01-703 2917, Potters Bar (77) 50735, 01-455 4977 or on the night by 7.40.

Exhibitions

WHITECHAPEL ART GALLERY. Art for Society. Contemporary British Art with a Social or Political Purpose Tues.-Sun. 11 a.m.-6 p.m. until 18 June. Whitechapel High St, E1. Tel: 01-377 0107. Nearest Underground: Aldgate East.

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Entertainments

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PEOPLE'S FESTIVAL 18 JUNE 11 a.m.-11 p.m. Alexandra Palace. Evening Concert 7.30 p.m. Cimarons, Subway Sect and Crazy Cavan, Throughout the day: Folk: Adrian Mitchell, Bob Pegg, Pete Brown, Leon Rosselson and Hamish Henderson. Debates: Peter Hain, Paul Holborow (from Anti-Nazi League) on 'The Struggle Against Racism'; Prof. Jim Jeffery, Dr John Baruch, David Groom, on 'Nuclear Energy - Which Way?'; Theatre: 'Monstrous Regiment', 'Music Hall' and 'Incubus'. Rally: Napolitano (P.C.I.) Colette Privar (French Woman Communist Deputy), Gordon McLennan (Gen. Sec. C.P.G.B.). Jazz: John Stevens 'Away'. 'Quarterly'. Guy-Riley-Wachsman Trio. Sport: World Cup Live, Karate, Football and other competitions. Children: festival and creche. Films: 'Take it like a man Ma'am', 'Harlan County', 'Hollywood Ten', 'Zimbabwe', 'The Big Club', 'Stand Together' and others. Tickets: Adults £2, OAPs and claimants £1, children 50p. Write to Festival Organiser, 16 King Street, London WC2E 8HY.

Poetry

THE NEW POETRY. 8 p.m. Thurs. 22 June. Using Oscillograph Douglas Oliver will display unusual features of poetic rhythm and link what is said to a reading of his own poetry and prose. ICA, Nash House, The Mall, SW1 (930 6393).

Cinema

SCREEN ON THE HILL. 435 3366. (Opp. Belsize Park Tube). John Cassavetes' 'Opening Night' (AA). Progs at 3.0, 5.45 & 8.35.

Meetings

FOCUS GROUP. Royal Commonwealth Society, 18 Northumberland Ave, WC2. Tues. 27 June 6.30 p.m. A talk on 'Changes we need to end world instability' by Dr Kim Beazley, former Vice Chairman of the Joint Foreign & Defence Committee of the Australian Parliament, & Minister of Education '72-'75. Adm. 30p for non RCS members.

ELIE WIESEL. renowned Jewish thinker, author of 'Souls on Fire', 'The Jews of Silence' speaks to students and young men and women at Lubavitch House, 107-115 Stamford Hill, London, N16 5RP. Tel. 01-800 0022. Wed. 21 June 8 p.m. (Doors open 7.30 p.m.). All welc. Admission free.

COMBATING THE NATIONAL FRONT. Talk by Dr J. Gewirtz at 8 p.m. on Tuesday 20 June at the Young Fabian Group, 11 Dartmouth Street, London SW1.

'SCOTTISH NATIONALISM', talk by member of SNP, London Young Humanists, 13 Prince of Wales Terrace, London W8. Sun. 18 June 7.30 p.m. Adm. 30p.

RAMAKRISHNA VEDANTA CENTRE at 23 Norfolk Sq., W2. Sun. 18 June Swami Bhavanada on 'Unseen Warfare' 5 p.m. All welc. Vedanta mag. 50p.

THEOSOPHY. Simple talks for enquirers. Sun. 18 June 8 p.m. 'What is Practical Theosophy?'. S.a.e., free pamphlet, book list ULT, 62 Queen's Gardens, London W2.

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LEEDS Thurs. June 22, 7 p.m. Rupert Beckett Lecture Theatre, Leeds University. Introduced by **Cliff Slaughter** (WRP Central Committee).

PRESTON Wed. June 28 7 p.m. The Avenham Suite, Lancaster Road. Introduced by **Tony Banda** (WRP Central Committee).

SWANSEA Fri. June 23, 7 p.m. Swansea Leisure Centre. Introduced by **John Spencer** (WRP Central Committee).

LIVERPOOL Thurs. June 29, 7 p.m. Bluecoat Chambers, School Lane. Introduced by **Tony Banda** (WRP Central Committee).

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